Vol. 45 No. 18

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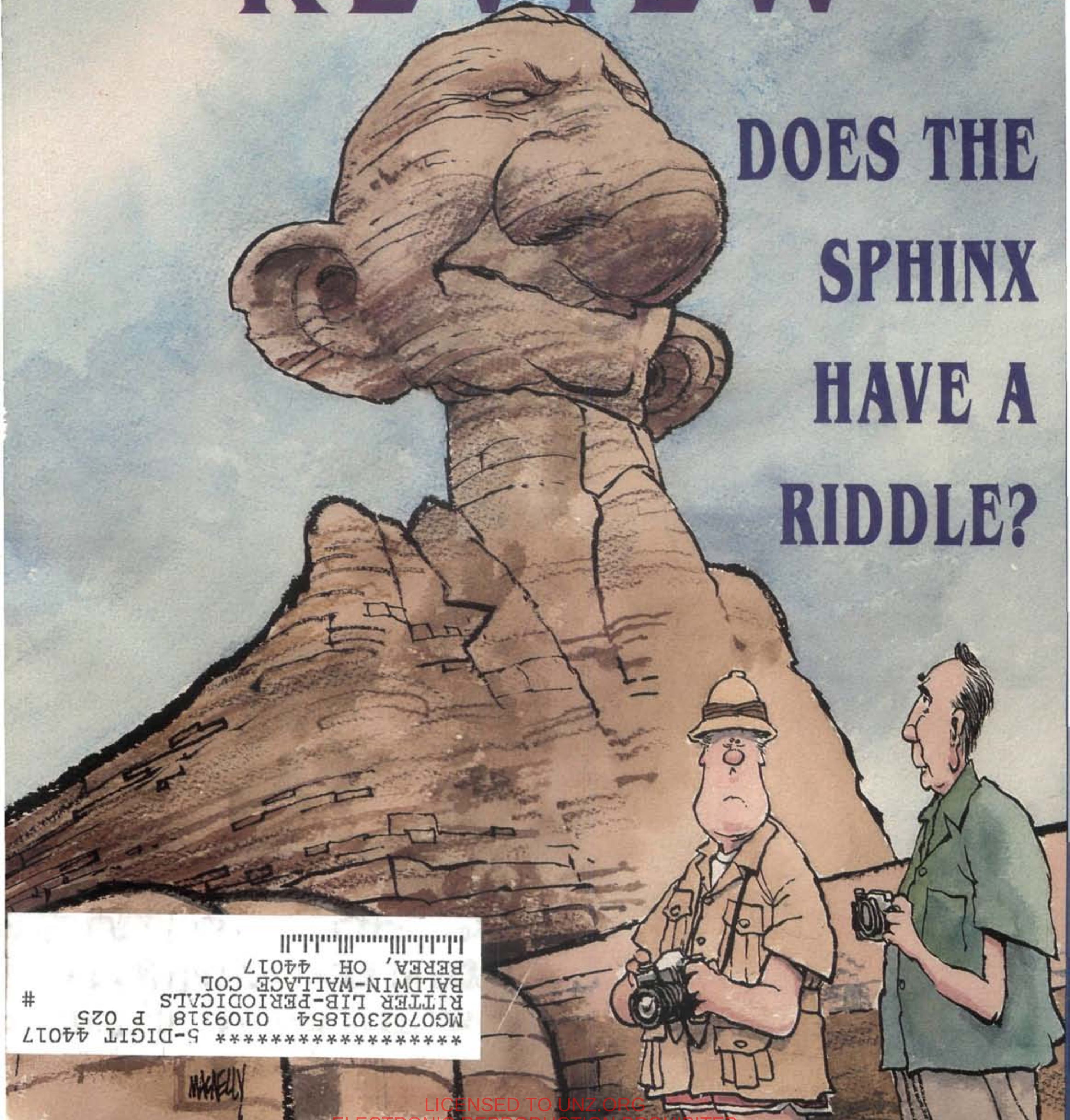
Counterrevolution Betrayed — Elliott Abrams in Nicaragua

NATIONAL REVIEW

DOES THE SPHINX HAVE A RIDDLE?



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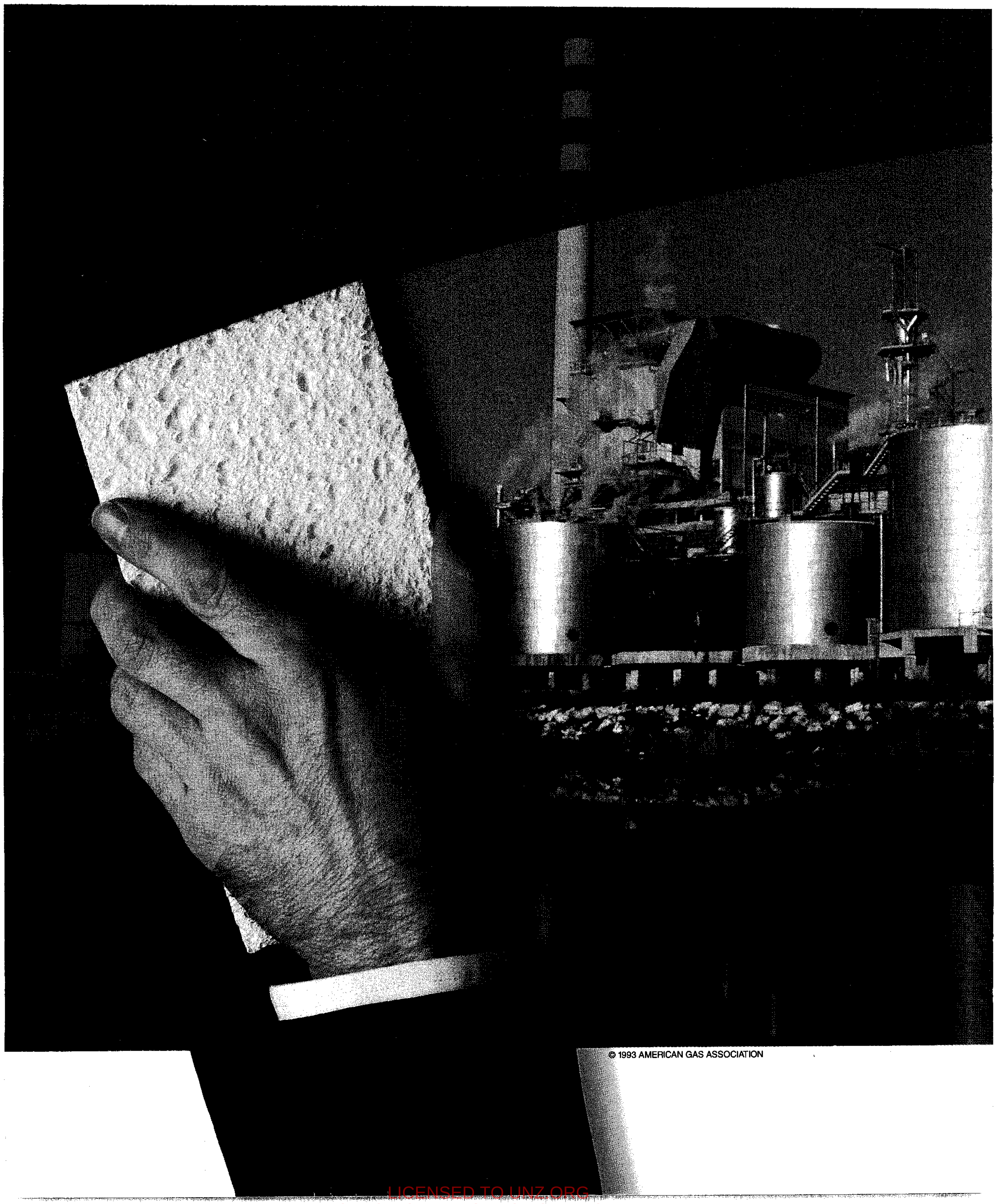

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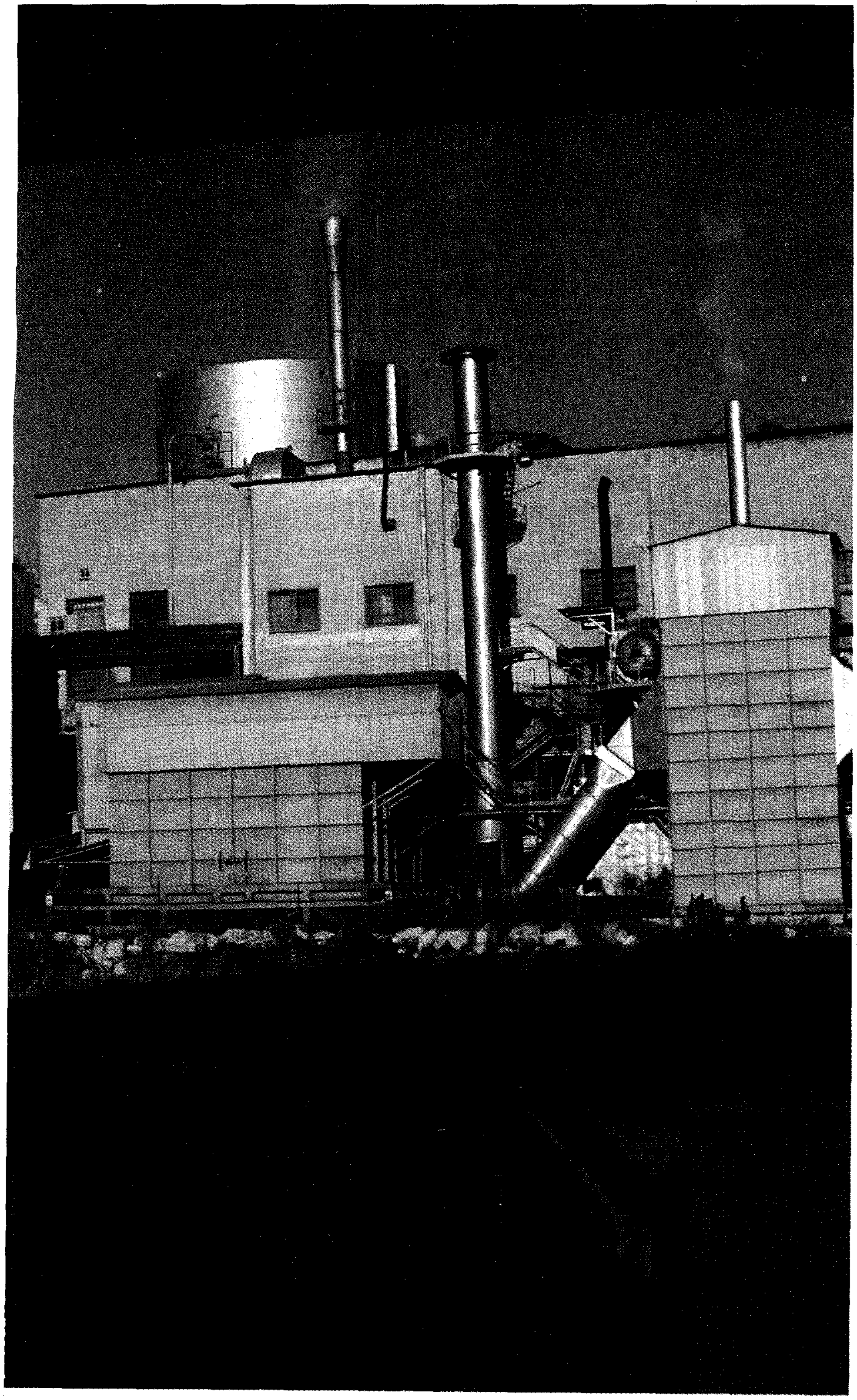

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NATIONAL REVIEW

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Cover illustration by Jeff MacNelly

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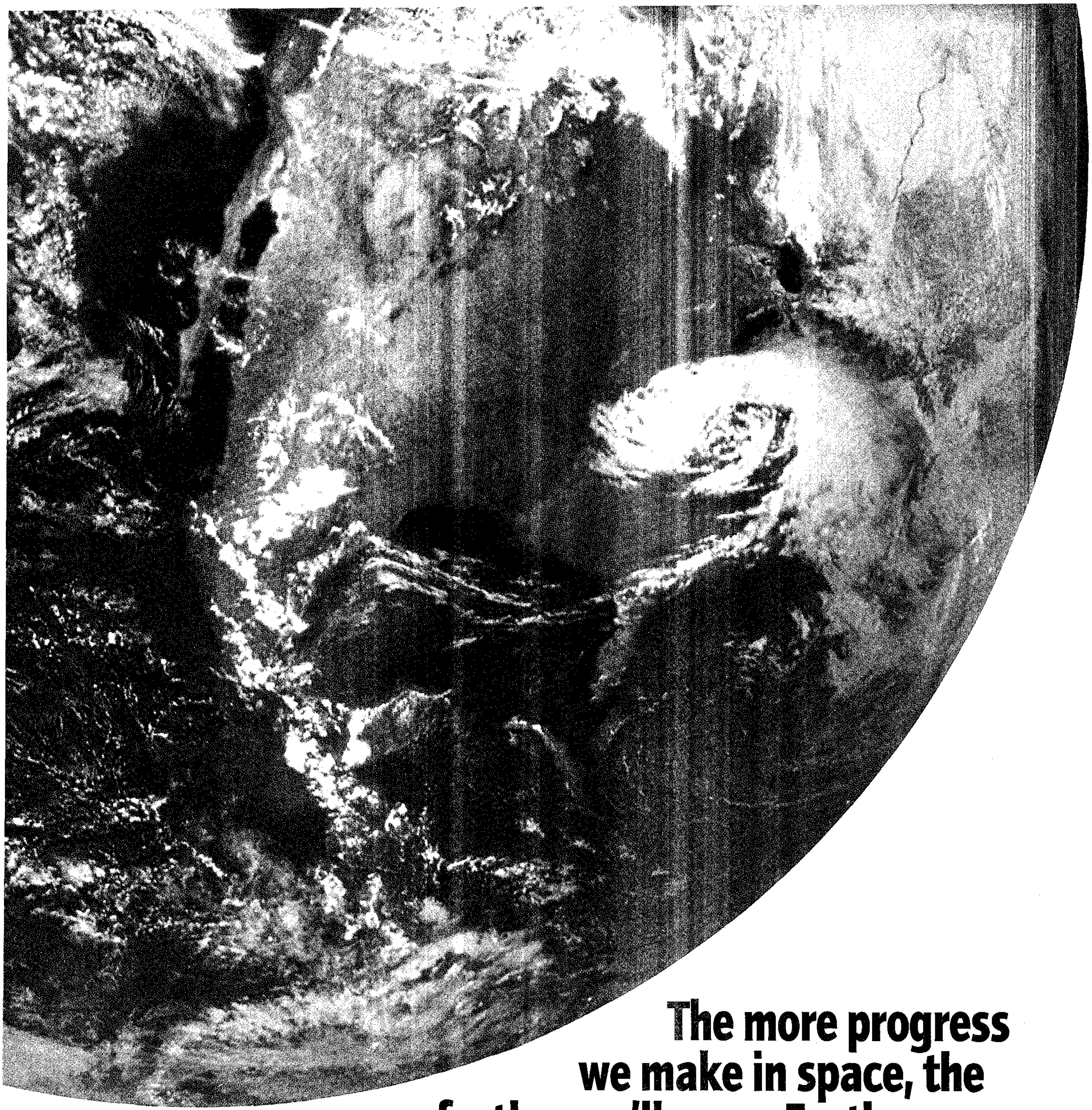
NATIONAL REVIEW (ISSN: 0028-0038) is published bi-weekly, except for the first issue in January, by National Review, Inc., at 150 East 35th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. ©National Review, Inc., 1993. Address all editorial mail, manuscripts, letters to the editor, etc. to Editorial Dept., NATIONAL REVIEW, 150 East 35th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016. Address all subscription mail orders, changes of address, undeliverable copies, etc. to Circulation Dept., NATIONAL REVIEW, P.O. Box 96639, Washington, D.C. 20090-6639; phone, 301-350-7258, Monday–Friday, 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. Eastern time. Adjustment requests should be accompanied by a current mailing label or facsimile. Direct classified advertising inquiries to: Classifieds Dept., National Review, 150 East 35th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016 or call 212-679-7330. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Circulation Dept., NATIONAL REVIEW, P. O. Box 96639, Washington, D.C. 20090-6639.

RATES: $57.00 a year (25 issues). Add $21.50 for Canada and other foreign subscriptions, per year. (All payments in U.S. currency.) The editors cannot be responsible for unsolicited manuscripts unless return postage or, better, a stamped self-addressed envelope is enclosed. Opinions expressed in signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the editors.



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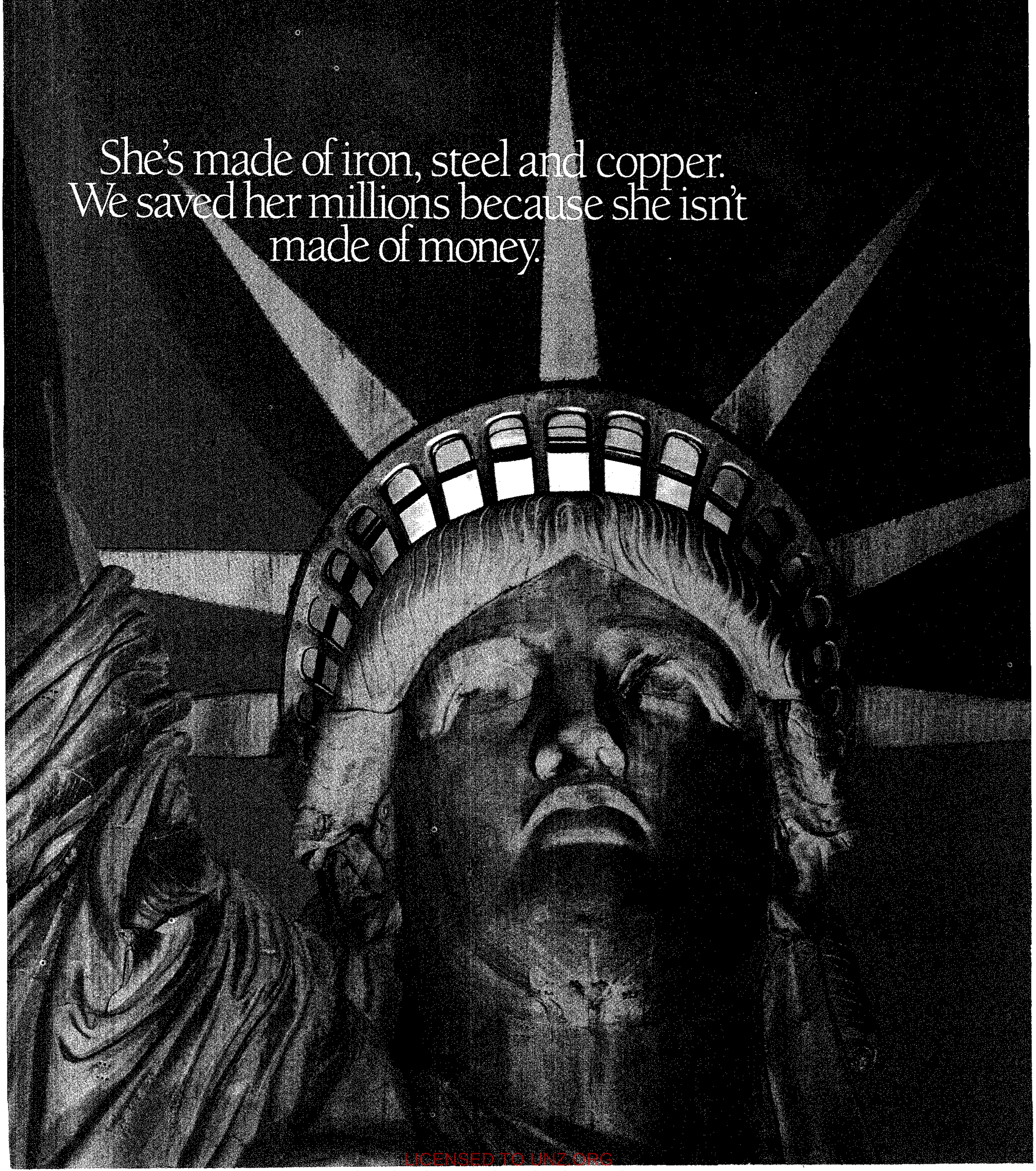


LETTERS

Ill-Gotten Gains?

Stephen Moore argues ["Capital Crime," Aug. 9] that higher capital-gains-tax rates result in lower tax revenues, citing the experience of the last 15 or so years. However, he fails to even consider two possible explanations that completely contradict his conclusion:

1. People may have shifted gains or losses from one year to another in anticipation of rate changes. Changes in tax rates do not occur without warning. They are preceded by a great deal of very public discussion, allowing people to attempt to realize gains or losses in the year when rates are more favorable. This is almost certainly the explanation of why realizations doubled from 1985 to 1986. What else could explain such a huge increase?

2. When income-tax rates are higher than the capital-gains rate, people have an incentive to convert ordinary income to capital gains. Financial advisors have no shortage of tools for accomplishing this. If capital-gains realizations increase in response to a rate reduction, part or all of the increase may be a shift from income-tax revenues rather than an overall increase in tax returns to the government.

It may indeed be true that higher capital-gains rates mean lower government revenues, but Moore has not even come close to proving it.

Jack Kaplan
Hamden, Conn.

Yes, the near doubling in capital-gains realizations in 1986 was a result of taxpayers selling assets in anticipation of the impending tax-rate hike to 28 per cent. Capital gains then tumbled by more than half in each of the five years after the rate increase for a net reduction in revenues. In other words, people radically changed their behavior before and after the tax change. If only Mr. Kaplan and I could convince Congress of this. I would favor indexing capital gains to inflation and chopping the rate to 20 per cent. If Mr. Kaplan worries that this would give people an incentive to shift ordinary income into capital gains, let's cut the top personal-income-tax rate to 20 per cent as well. —SM

Identity Problems

In the same issue in which William F. Buckley Jr. laments the "trend toward omnipotent government" ["The Perpetual Roller Coaster," Aug. 23] the editors of *NR* advocate issuing a "*de facto* identity card" ["The Week"] and belittle opposition to such a step as "libertarian." Can you think of any step more certain to solidify government power than a national identity card?

I'm no libertarian; I always thought that the concept of limited government was the crux of conservative thought. But here come *NR*'s editors advocating a national ID for the mere expediency of controlling illegal immigration. We've gone through several major wars and the Cold War without it; surely the current threat does not justify so draconian a step.

Andrew Sicree
Penn State University
University Park, Pa.

What NR *advocated was an unforgeable Social Security card that would serve as a* "de facto *identity card" for people seeking employment. We don't think that asking job applicants to demonstrate that they are not illegal immigrants is an intolerable intrusion on their—or anyone else's—liberty.* —ED.

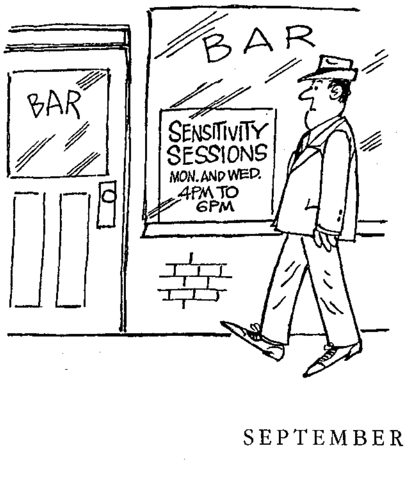
Confirming a Miracle

In his article on Lourdes ["To Be a Pilgrim," Aug. 9] William F. Buckley Jr. should have pursued the cure of Marie Bailly with greater vigor, using the primary source on which the account by Mrs. Cranston is based. This primary source is a book by Alexis Carrel entitled *The Voyage to Lourdes* (translated from the French by Virgilia Petersen; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950, 52 pages).

Those who doubt that miracles are possible may find it interesting that the doctor who observed Marie Bailly's cure with his own eyes, Dr. Carrel, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology for 1912. He cannot be dismissed as a crackpot.

The Voyage to Lourdes can still be found in some large libraries, but unfortunately it is now out of print. Perhaps Mr. Buckley could use his influence to bring it back into print.

Dennis D. Murphy
West Allis, Wis.



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Fault Lines over the Crack-Up

Optimistically, but incorrectly, I hoped that Robert Sirico's article "The Catholic Crack-Up" [Aug. 23] would substantially amplify the point Robert Bork made in his earlier review of John Gray's *Post-Liberalism* [Aug. 9], i.e., "The problem with relying upon religion today is that there are not enough religious conservatives and that much mainstream religion has been largely secularized, so that it often becomes the ally of left-liberalism."

It may come as a shock to non-Catholics, but to this every-Sunday-and-holy-day Mass-attending Catholic, Mr. Bork's point brilliantly and succinctly exposes the real reason for the "Catholic crack-up."

A modest sampling of the Catholic Church's left-liberalism includes: demands for a "just" distribution of the world's wealth; demands for removal of all immigration controls into our "wealthy" country; unequivocal support of organized labor; and a pacifist politics that beyond the pale (the memory of John Cardinal O'Connor, the chief chaplain for Catholics in our armed forces, sending American men to the Persian Gulf with the condemnation of their actions as "wrong" is indelible).

There are numerous other items which make life as a Catholic contradictory and confusing. (Its equivalent of the 55-mph speed limit, i.e., the prohibition against artificial contraception, is an obvious one.) But Mr. Sirico shoots wide of the mark when he devotes so much attention to the ordination of women and liturgical changes in the Mass.

Frank J. Natoli
Newton, N.J.

My arguments about the way in which women's ordination is put forth, and the disintegration of prayer in the Church, precisely amplify Mr. Bork's point. While *it was not my intention to outline all the problems eroding spiritual authority, it seems to me that Catholic identity is far more tied to the Church's view of sacramentality and the moral context for the generation of new life than its prudent (vs. dogmatic) posture on economics (about which I have written extensively). Go ahead and drive 100 mph if you want, but then do not complain about secularization.* —RAS

The Fairness Doctrine

Susan Lindsey's analysis of civic fairness ["Fairness a Two-Year-Old Can Understand," Aug. 9] was a timely piece and considers a question I have long pondered. Publicly stated principles of fairness have been elusive at best. Everyone wants to be "fair." But crafting fair policy requires knowing what goal is being pursued. How can we know if a tax policy is *more* fair if no one cites a principle for comparison?

My search began with liberal colleagues, who use the term freely, particularly when federal money is at stake. Since President Clinton's tax policies were clearly more fair, according to these colleagues, it appeared that they did have a standard in mind: progressivity was fair. But tax progressivity is a structure, not a moral principle; so, I asked, what makes a progressive structure fair? The conversation ended abruptly.

Extracting a liberal principle from public discourse was slightly more fruitful. Increasing the number of different taxes paid by the rich, liberals argued, is more fair. Increasing the marginal tax rates at higher incomes is fair. Indeed, a quick and dirty analysis of public statements leads to this principle, once articulated by a German journalist: "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs." With the Marxist principle of fairness being rejected around the world, it's clear why the principle is never clearly articulated.

I propose a simple, reasonable, and defensible principle: Fairness is paying for goods and services received. Everyone receives security from a national military, so it is fair that each citizen pays an equal amount for that service. Others receive federally funded food; they should pay for the goods. It may be that some poor receive more goods and services; therefore, it would be fair for those citizens to pay more than those who receive fewer goods and services. Paying for what you receive is fair.

But, obviously, there's more to civic policy than "fairness." While such a system would be fair, charity urges against it. The point is this: Current tax policy is not fair, and increasing the amount of money taken from those earning more means that tax policy is becoming *less* fair. But we, as a society, have decided to tolerate (even endorse) unfairness, in the name of compassion, and to provide for others beyond what is fair.

An implication, of course, is that liberals are wrong when they argue that taking more income from those who do not receive proportionately more services is "fair." Another implication is that there may be a threshold at which taxpayers cease to support unfairness in the name of charity.

Argument about what constitutes tax fairness will undoubtedly continue; perhaps some bold politician will even articulate a coherent principle. Regardless, the question we *should* be asking is: What amount and type of charity will we continue to support?

William S. Pate, Jr.
Chapel Hill, N.C.

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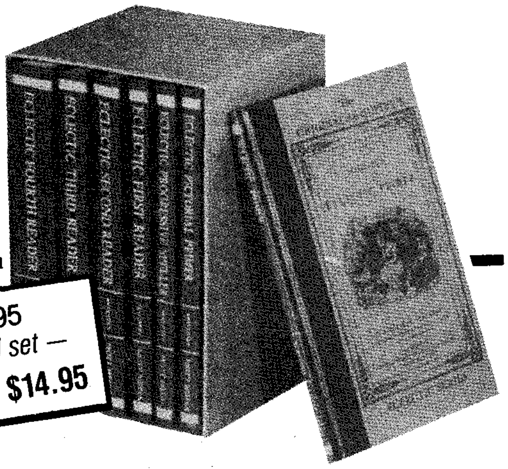

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FROM THE EDITOR

Cracking Down, Not Up

■ To San Diego, where the National Review Institute held its third "Conservative Summit," with almost four hundred attendees and lively speeches from Jack Kemp, Bill Bennett, and Bruce Herschensohn, among others.

I came away with two impressions. The first was that the conservative crack-up has been greatly exaggerated. From parental rights to Bosnia, debate was passionate but good-humored. Almost all of the time.

Second, conservatives are gradually moving to restrict immigration. The panel on "Immigration, Language, and Citizenship" was a strong antidote to previous orthodoxy on open borders.

This was disputed by one participant, who cited the warm reception for speakers favoring that orthodoxy.

True enough, but pro-immigration passages received only tepid applause. And conservatives are, anyway, respectful to their leaders, reasoning that they will come round more readily if asked politely.

■ The "New Politics of Sex" panel produced the expected fireworks—but in the unexpected form of a dispute on civil rights. Justin Raimondo, opposing gay rights, argued that they were nonetheless the outcome of the 1960s civil-rights revolution, which had led inevitably to the caste system now imposed upon American society.

This—plus a slighting remark about "Saint" Martin Luther King—provoked David Horowitz into an angry riposte. He accused Mr. Raimondo of, in effect, being indifferent to the civil rights of black Americans.

In slighting Dr. King—a flawed but great leader of a just cause—Mr. Raimondo violated the rule advanced in *Julian the Apostate*, by Gore Vidal, that one should never annoy one's opponent in secondary matters. (Of course, few people have violated that rule as often as Mr. Vidal himself. It remains a sound one, nonetheless.) He thereby contributed to confusion over his main argument.

That was not a rejection of the civil rights of black Americans, but a claim that specific provisions in the 1964 Civil Rights Act, by making discrimination in private employment a civil offense without providing a test for determining when it had occurred, led logically to hiring and promotion quotas for more and more "minorities" (among whom gays seek inclusion).

There is no doubt that the 1964 Act led to this *status quo*. The dispute is over whether this was inevitable.

Mr. Horowitz can claim, citing chapter and verse, that the passage of the bill was accompanied by the most explicit assurances that it could never permit, let alone impose, quotas. Mr. Raimondo can reply that since the courts cannot read minds to see if a discriminatory intent is lurking there, they will inevitably drift into *inferring* this inward disgrace from such outward signs as whether a given minority is employed in a company in proportion to its numbers in the locality.

There is only one way to resolve this dispute: explicitly repeal the quotas now burdening the economy, aggravating social tensions, and imposing racial injustice. We will then discover whether law can effectively prohibit private discrimination without employing methods that are at least as odious as the original offense. On that Mr. Raimondo and Mr. Horowitz presumably agree.

■ As I was leaving the hotel, a lady congratulated the NRI on assembling not only the best brains but also the wittiest stand-up comics in America.

Most of them were amateurs with stage names like Jack Kemp and Bill Bennett. But the weekend's single best line came from a professional, Rob Long, the *Cheers* scriptwriter, who, after lamenting the life of a Hollywood conservative, comforted himself thus:

"Statistics show that 1 in 3 Hollywood conservatives goes on to become President of the United States."

—John O'Sullivan

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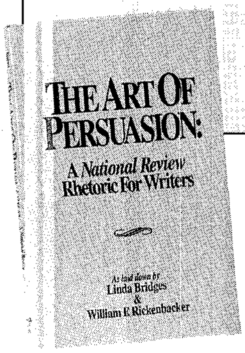
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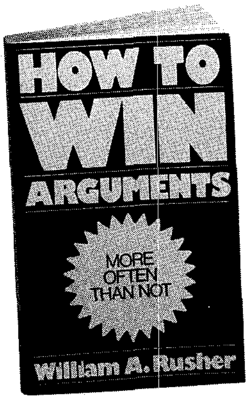

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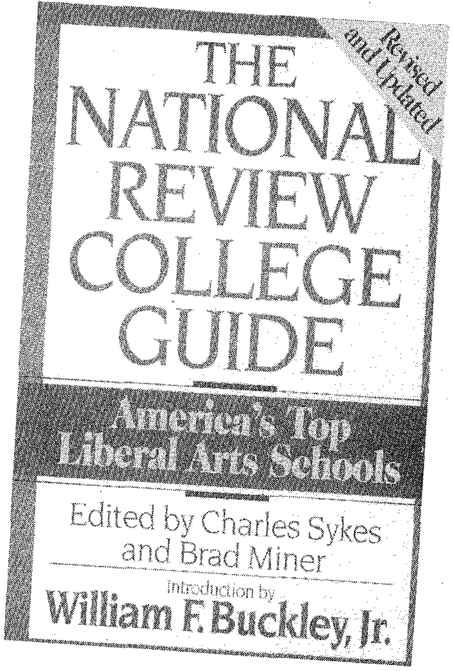
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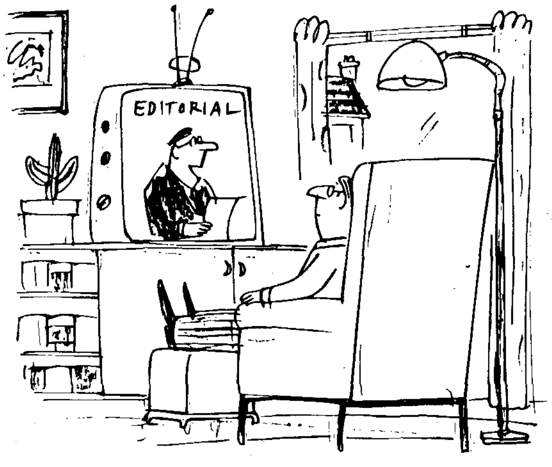
FOR THE RECORD

■ U.S. Trade Representative **Mickey Kantor** says "NAFTA's environmental provisions are a model for new international cooperation. Under them, no country in the agreement can lower its environmental standards—ever." . . . **Bill Clinton** hopes to persuade Speaker **Tom Foley** to round up Democrats in support of NAFTA. Foley was quoted recently: "Individual members are going to make up their own minds on NAFTA." . . . "When it comes to the environment, **Bush** was bad, but Clinton, presiding over one of the biggest land-grabs in American history, is worse," says the Left's venerable **Alexander Cockburn**, referring to Interior Secretary **Bruce Babbitt**'s draconian new plan to save wetlands. Alaska Sen. **Ted Stevens** calls the policy "a rubber stamping of the Wilderness Society." . . . **Michael Boskin**, chairman of Council of Economic Advisors under Bush, says the current Administration's "rhetoric about the private sector reminds me of my conversations with the then–Soviets and East Europeans in 1989. They had learned the vocabular of private markets, but they had no conceptual basis and little experience to understand what it meant." . . . It is Maine tradition that the first Atlantic salmon of the season taken from the Penobscot River is presented to the President. But this year 81-year-old **Scott Westfall** became impatient after waiting four months to hear from White House about appointment for the presentation. Eventually, he said "to heck with it" and ate it himself.

■ Virginia Gov. **Douglas Wilder** (D.) wants to be senator. He also wants Bill Clinton to repudiate endorsement of incumbent Sen. **Charles Robb**, whom Wilder is challenging for Democratic nomination. Supporting governor's request: Inaugural poet **Maya Angelou**, Democratic Black Caucus Chairman **C. Delores Tucker**, and former D.C. mayor **Marion Barry**. In a letter, black leaders reminded Clinton that "the African American community furnished . . . 30 per cent of your total vote." . . . New York Sen. **Al D'Amato** (R.) wants to be governor. He has plans for late-September $1-million fundraiser to help his challenge of **Mario Cuomo**. D'Amato added however, that if for some reason he doesn't run, "I'm not going to abdicate my responsibility" to influence who GOP candidate is. . . . **Edward Kennedy** wants to remain a senator, but recent fundraiser that was expected to draw 250 donors attracted only 25 or so. Kennedy, however, has raised more money ($2.5 million) this year than any other senator. . . . Constituents of Rep. **Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky** (D., Pa.) gave her an earful upon her return from Washington, where she decided at last minute to support the President's tax hike. A sign at protest rally played on her nickname, Three M: "*M*ore Taxes. *M*ore Spending. *M*ore Waste." . . . Staffers of embattled Ways & Means Chairman **Dan Rostenkowski** "*all* have their résumés out," reports *New York Post*'s **Cindy Adams**. (Perhaps they're looking for jobs at the *Post*).



"That's our editorial point of view. If you disagree, we welcome you to raise the capital to buy out this station."

■ Also embattled is House Minority Leader **Bob Michel**, who continues to miff colleagues. In second dispatch of his infamous *Peoria Journal Star* interview (in which he has so far lambasted conservative freshmen representatives and expressed relief that Clinton budget passed), Mr. Michel did not rule out acquiescence to either additional new taxes to pay for Clinton health-care plan, or for including abortion in basic benefit package. "Somebody has got to pay for it," he explained. . . . **Hillary Clinton** is working to get support of five marginal Republican senators for health-care plan. They are: **John Chafee**, **Jim Jeffords**, **John Danforth**, **Nancy Kassebaum**, and **Dave Durenberger**, according to *U.S. News & World Report*. . . . Last month former First Lady **Nancy Reagan** tried to call Congress to record her and her husband's opposition to budget bill, only to be greeted repeatedly with a busy signal.

■ **Boris Yeltsin** became first Russian leader to acknowledge 1940 massacre of 20,000 Polish officers by **Josef Stalin** in Katyn Forest. Yeltsin and Polish President **Lech Walesa** said in a joint declaration that Warsaw's eventual membership in NATO would pose no problem for Russian interests. . . . Russian anti-corruption commission says Vice President **Aleksandr Rutskoi** set up a Swiss trust fund for himself and family after failed 1991 coup. . . . According to rumors in Seoul, 81-year-old North Korean dictator **Kim Il-sung** is dying. Moreover, **Kim Jong-il**, his son, and possible successor, was severly injured in a car crash. . . . A first: Israel's chief rabbi, **Yisrael Lau**, will meet Pope **John Paul II** in Rome later this month. . . . **Scott Marciel** arrived in Hanoi two weeks ago as first U.S. diplomat stationed there since 1975. . . . U.S. State Department's Office of Diplomatic Security is training bodyguards for ANC president **Nelson Mandela**.

■ The *White House Bulletin*, which announces comings and goings of personnel at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, announced the job change of "**Eric Berman**, a white man, currently serving as deputy research director . . ."

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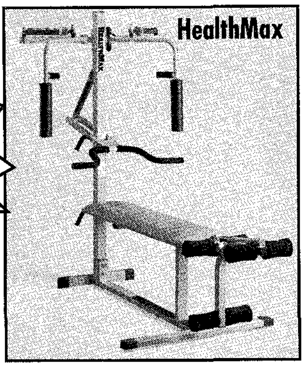
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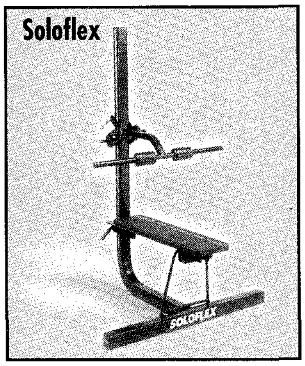
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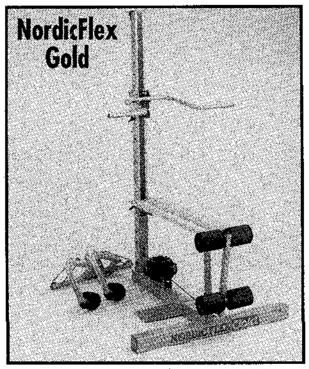
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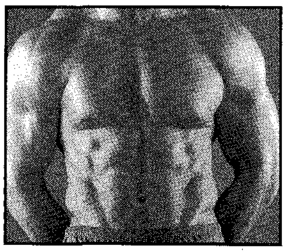

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THE WEEK

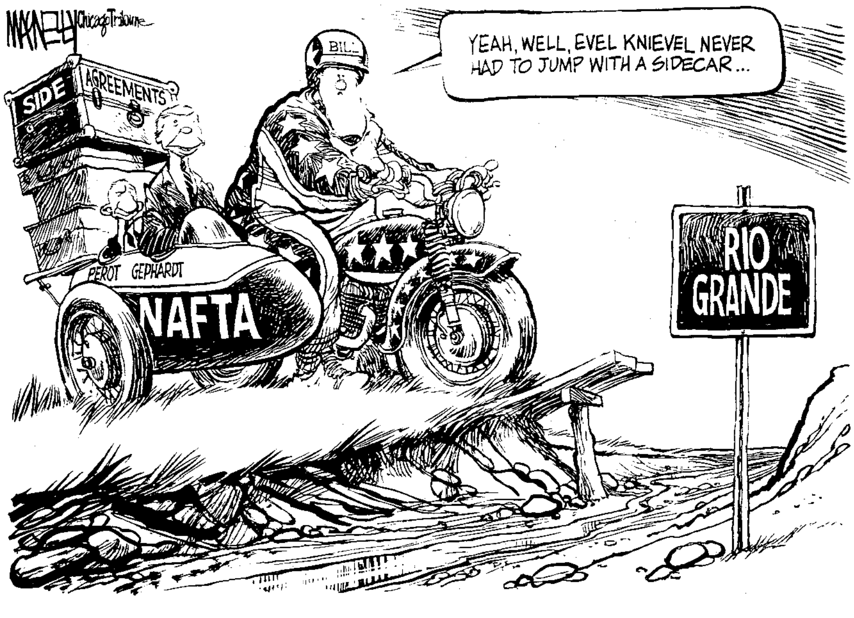
■ Bill Clinton's vacation is over, and we're only sorry it couldn't be made retroactive to January.

■ Dr. Joycelyn Elders, Bill Clinton's nominee for Surgeon General, has seen her high-octane rhetoric fuel enough controversy for a dozen confirmation hearings. But since one man's provocation is another's plain-speaking, Dr. Elders deserves to be judged by the value of her prescriptions. In the midst of an epidemic of teen pregnancies, with all the consequences in terms of welfare payments, disease, and chaotic lives, Dr. Elders proposes evangelizing for condoms as the solution. The argument is familiar, and superficially plausible: teenagers are having sex, condoms are (fairly) effective, so . . . The argument ignores the facts of real life: condoms break; teenagers in the heat of passion misuse or forget them; most important, condom programs imply approval of, and thus encourage, teen sexual activity. The proof is in Dr. Elders's own bailiwick. Before she took over as director of the Arkansas Department of Health, the state's high teen-pregnancy rate had dropped 10 per cent. After she instituted school-based clinics, the rate rose by 17 per cent. Some solution. Joycelyn Elders is not the wrong woman for Surgeon General because she's feisty, she's the wrong woman because she's wrong.

■ The case of the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL) and its illegal pre–Gulf War loans to Iraq gave Democrats and grassy-knoll types food for speculation during the waning months of the Bush Administration. Here was another instance of spooks and Republicans playing the Great Game, propping up sleazy dictators before waging war on them. All that was missing was a posthumous appearence by William Casey. President Bush's Justice Department had concluded that it was rogue employees in the bank's Atlanta office who funneled $5 billion to Iraq, without any collusion from the main office in Rome (or from the CIA). But old conspiracy hands knew *that* was a whitewash. Candidate Clinton, ready to surf on waves generated by the Left, promised a new investigation. Now John Hogan, a top aide to Attorney General Janet Reno, has concluded that the Atlanta office of BNL *was* on its own: "not working . . . at the direction of, with the knowledge of, or under the auspices or approval of the bank in Rome." Marvin Shoob, the district judge trying the case, still thinks "it could not all have happened by chance." Nor did it; venal bank officers should be ascribed to Original Sin, not chance. But Oliver Stone is doubtless screen-testing Gore Vidal for the role by now.

■ Like Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton is a President who makes his predecessors seem better in retrospect. In fact—have you noticed?—Mr. Carter himself doesn't seem quite so bad now. Senator Pat Moynihan calls the phenomenon "defining deviancy down."

■ Fed up with the House policy of blocking popular legislation by concealing the names on "discharge petitions"—the procedure to dislodge legislation such as the balanced-budget amendment from hostile committees—Representative Jim Inhofe (R., Okla.) has introduced a bill to make the names of petition signers public. Such a move would reduce the power of committee chairmen and expose congressmen who grandstand for bills while relying on the discharge petition's secrecy to hide their inaction. It's no surprise that the Democratic leadership has moved to kill Mr. Inhofe's bill by sending it, supposedly DOA, to the Rules Committee. But the congressman, fighting fire with fire, has waged a relentless campaign on its behalf (aided by the *Wall Street Journal*, which has published the names of congressmen who have refused to sign it). He is now reported to have enough current signatures (some 213) and



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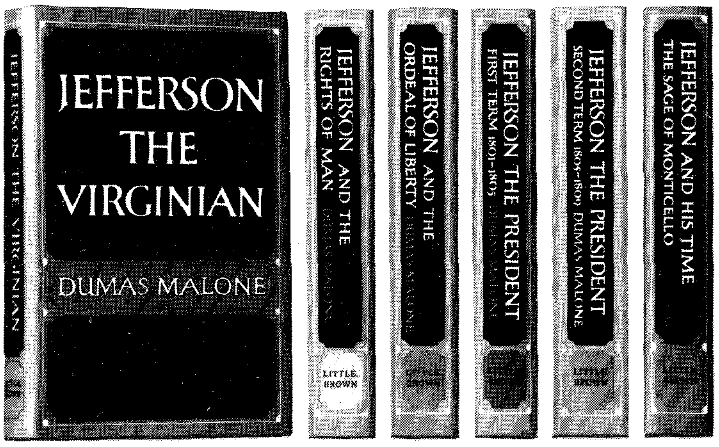
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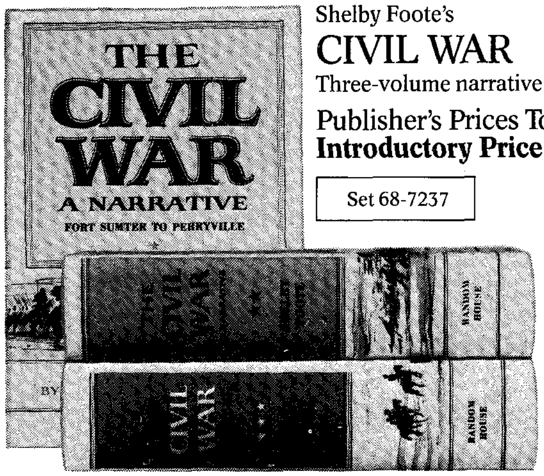
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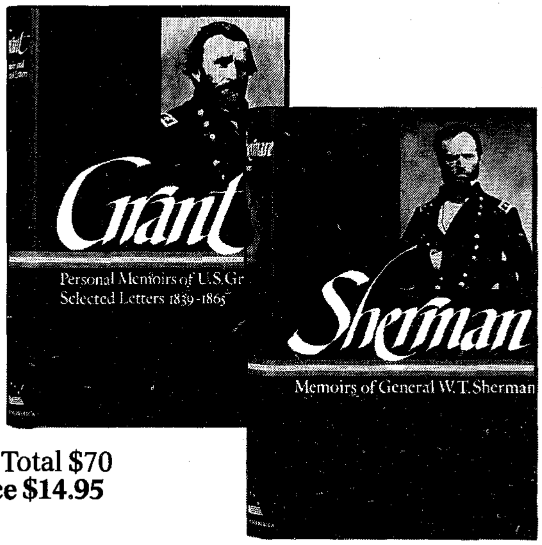
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commitments from additional congressmen that the magic number—218 signatures—could be reached when the House returns from summer recess on September 8. Of course, Tom Foley & Co. will twist arms to get Democratic signatories to defect (six already have). If they fail, expect fireworks on the House floor.

■ Speculation grows that Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen may soon leave the Clinton Cabinet—speculation fueled by Mr. Bentsen's comment that "the President and I had a good laugh over the speculation."

■ When he was looking for a new Supreme Court judge Mr. Clinton developed little rapport in a two-hour conversation with his first favorite, Judge Stephen Breyer. Judge Breyer's new book, just published by Harvard University Press, suggests one possible reason—he is no enthusiast for Big Government. *Breaking the Vicious Circle: Toward Effective Risk Regulation* is a withering attack on the absurdities and costs of health and safety regulation as it has developed at Washington's alphabet soup of agencies. The author writes, for example, of the Food and Drug Administration's mania for requiring warning labels on products: "To examine a printed warning from an aspirin package, with its many paragraphs of tiny print, is to wonder what the point of it is. Would the eagle-eyed reader who saw 'Risk of cancer: 1 in 100,000' know what that means?" The Clinton reject (we deploy that as a term of approbation) goes on to argue that there is "no consistent scientific rationale" for the standard methodology used in estimating cancer risks anyway, and explains the string of wild guesses, silly assumptions, and institutional prejudices that produce so many federal regulations. Judge Breyer suggests that if Milton were around today he might describe our present regulatory system as one where "Chaos umpire sits, and by decision more embroils the fray by which he reigns."

■ Missing: A government vehicle valued at $400 million—not counting the toilet seats—somewhere near Mars.

■ Maybe it's time to put the old dog NASA out of his misery. He just doesn't hunt any more. After repeated failures to launch a shuttle this summer, and the loss of both the Mars observer and a weather satellite in days, it is getting ridiculous for the space agency to make the old excuse of bad luck. The pride of the free world a generation ago when it put a man on the moon, NASA is now a bureaucratic creature that soaks up billions of taxpayer dollars for fiasco after fiasco. When the weather service or a telephone company wants a new satellite, let it contract directly with aerospace and communications companies for space equipment and launch services. And if the nation wants to explore Mars, let it be managed by someone outside government, like the National Academy of Sciences. NASA has become an incompetent and unnecessary go-between—a monopoly travel agency who doubles the cost of fares, and keeps losing valuable luggage.

■ Earlier this year, reports that the African National Congress had committed atrocities in its prison camps in the 1980s led Nelson Mandela to order an investigation. Result of investigation? Guilty as charged. Sentence to be imposed? None—no punishment of the guilty officials, no compensation for the victims. It seems that extremism in the struggle against apartheid is no vice. Asked if the ANC believed that the ends justified the means (even murder and torture), Mr. Mandela mumbled: "You can draw your own conclusions."

■ As the summer of the great flood ends and the waters recede, wheels turn in some little bureaucratic office somewhere to declare the Great Plains federally protected wetlands. Bet on it.

■ The National Endowment for the Arts is funding another corker. It has given $50,400 to a New York–based artists' group called Creative Time, one of whose projects is a propaganda campaign titled "Accountability." The project consists of postcards and posters disparaging the idea that the Communist regime of Vietnam should have to account for American POW/MIAs; under a famous picture of three American POWs it shows three Vietnamese children with deformed limbs, alleged victims of Agent Orange. The pictures are accompanied by an extensive text accusing the U.S. of various atrocities, and asking: "If the U.S. holds the Vietnamese government accountable for all POW/MIAs before formalized relations can begin, shouldn't the U.S. be held accountable for our actions in Vietnam?" If this stuff is art, it's funded by the wrong government: Hanoi may not know much about art, but it knows what it likes.

■ Sunday, August 29, was Sock It to the Religious Right Day at the *New York Times*. The lead letter to the editor warned of "the repressive designs of militant religionists—Protestant Bible thumpers and their new-found Roman Catholic allies." Another letter called the Christian Coalition "one of the most dangerous forces on the American scene today," whose "theocratic principles," though "abhorrent to a majority of Americans," it seeks to "force" on the nation "by any means necessary." An op-ed piece branded its members "religious extremists," who are intent on "pushing their agenda on our schools. . . . This religious Right confront us with a threat far greater than the old threat of Communism." Oh

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yes—a third letter to the editor accused the religious Right of "intemperate and harsh rhetoric."

- A Maryland entrepreneur is marketing Clinton–Gore Bumpersticker Removers. Stand by for a Republican entrepreneur to market a gizmo to make the bumperstickers permanent.

Bosnian Trap

IT IS a maxim of international politics that a timid course usually ends up being the most dangerous. That is about to be proved in Bosnia. Because this Administration shrank from arming the Bosnians and giving them air support against Serbian aggression, it is about to place American ground troops in harm's way to uphold an unjust settlement fostered by its very timidity.

The Clinton Administration came into office talking big, but soon proved woefully inept. In February, the Administration was claiming with bravado that the Vance–Owen plan needed improvement because it didn't roll back Serb military gains enough. Now, it colludes in diplomatic efforts to ratify the Serb-dominated status quo—and this after seven months of further Serb aggression. On February 10, Warren Christopher threatened economic sanctions and the "full weight of American diplomacy" (wow!) to bring about a just settlement. He also promised that U.S. armed forces would be available to help police a settlement when one had been reached. Since Mr. Christopher was simultaneously abdicating any serious U.S. role in helping *shape* a settlement, or at least a decent one, this pledge seemed like a rhetorical flourish for an unlikely hypothetical situation. Now the bill is being presented.

Since the world community has done little or nothing to help Bosnian Muslims to resist aggression, and since it continues to deny them the wherewithal to defend themselves, Serb (and now Croat) encroachment inexorably shrinks the Bosnian rump state. Perhaps some enclaves will be spared, as President Clinton periodically gathers up the courage to threaten air action, for example, to protect Sarajevo. But the threats lose force in the repetition. It is increasingly clear that the President has no real desire to implement them, in the face of objection from European allies who want a quick Bosnian surrender to get it all over with. The impression spreads that his shows of toughness are a cover for collusion in the Munich-style pressure on the Bosnians. The Bosnians are courageously resisting surrender, but a terrible reality may leave them with no alternative.

At such a moment, the Clinton Administration reiterates its February 10 pledge to join in enforcing a settlement. Where the original pledge was in the context of a hypothetically fair compromise, its reiteration now is in the context of something much uglier. We are graciously offering up to 30,000 U.S. ground troops to enforce whatever surrender arrangement the Bosnians can be bludgeoned into signing. Even if such a patently unjust deal were struck, how long could it last? Does the United States really want its ground troops defending an unjust status quo against the Muslim resistance that will inevitably arise? Do we really want to be the Serbs' enforcers? That would be the worst of all outcomes.

The hour is late. But there is still time for an alternative policy—one that arms the Bosnians and gives them at least a chance to defend themselves and to restore the balance of forces on the ground. We might then get a more balanced and durable agreement—one that would not require an American military presence to survive.

Somalia Sucks Us In

With words recalling Kitchener's
  When twitted by the Boers,
Les Aspin's sent the Delta Force
  To do unpleasant chores
Which generate that squishy sound
Quagmires make when one's around.

W. H. VON DREELE

Dr. Gridlock and Mr. Hyde

DESPITE DEMOCRATIC cries of "gridlock," the GOP's performance on the Clinton budget was largely a triumph: Republicans articulated a broad alternative vision, made the budget a Democratic liability, and came close to defeating it. But with health-care reform looming, Republicans are tempted to abandon this successful formula in pursuit of an elusive bi-partisanship.

With his conciliatory tone at a recent National Governors Association meeting, Senator Dole has provoked worries that Dr. Gridlock will again become Mr. Hyde. The Minority Leader says, for instance, that while he opposes employer mandates, he might accept them if small businesses are protected. Senator John H. Chafee leads a Republican charge straight toward disaster with a plan that is just abridged Clinton. (It shares the basic assumption that government can run health care, minus the employer mandates and global budget.)

The drive for Republican conciliation (less apparent in the House) is based on the perceived need to

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"get to the table" with Mr. Clinton on health-care reform. Public support for reform is so universal, the thinking goes, that Republicans have to be players, not obstructionists. But, as will become increasingly clear, it's easy for voters to be for health-care reform in general. It's another matter to be for a plan that could cost jobs, limit consumer choice, impose unworkable price controls, and expand government control over a huge sector of the economy. The Chafee approach promises to sit Republicans down at the table just as the Clinton reform feast begins to look awfully unappetizing.

Senators like Don Nickles and Phil Gramm, who are pushing free-market-oriented plans akin to the Heritage Foundation's, have stronger nerves. It's the second opinion of these Dr. Gridlocks that could warn the country away from the Clinton plan, which looks more and more like an iatrogenic disease.

Eye of the Beholder

THE SOCIAL ISSUE *du jour* for much of the media is the "shocking" pattern of racial discrimination in bank mortgage lending. According to a Boston Federal Reserve Bank study of 6.6 million mortgage applications in 1991, blacks of all income levels are rejected for mortgages at more than twice the rate of whites. This disparity shrinks when adjusted for credit criteria such as the age and quality of the house. Minorities then seem to be rejected at a rate of 17 per cent versus 11 per cent for whites. Nonetheless, according to the Boston Fed, this is a clear sign of racism.

Or is it? The Boston Fed study itself admitted that rejected minority applications on average had "poorer objective qualifications." For that matter, Asian applicants were rejected less often than whites. And there was a very significant test pointing to non-discrimination that the Boston Fed study simply got wrong. If banks really hold blacks to a higher standard than whites, we would expect to find the default rate for blacks lower than that for whites. It isn't. Census data show that black and white mortgage borrowers have the same default rate. In other words, the higher black rejection rate reflected a rational—and successful—effort to equalize credit risks among mortgage applicants.

When this point was brought to her attention by *Forbes* magazine, Alicia Munnell, the Boston Fed's research director before she accepted a position with the Clinton Administration, admitted that it undermined her report's main conclusion. "I do not have evidence . . . no one has evidence," she conceded. That did not, of course, change her opinion that "discrimination occurs." Nor did her admission make it into subsequent news reports in the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* on the epidemic of racism in mortgage lending.

Discrimination *does* occur, but not the type that grabs headlines. Banks would rather not make mortgages of less than, say, $40,000, because processing costs and federal regulations make such small loans money-losers. They prefer mortgage applicants who have already established credit-worthiness by paying off credit cards and other loans. A stable job history is preferred to a history of part-time positions. None of these sound business practices has anything to do with race. But color-blind adherence to them might create the appearance of racial discrimination.

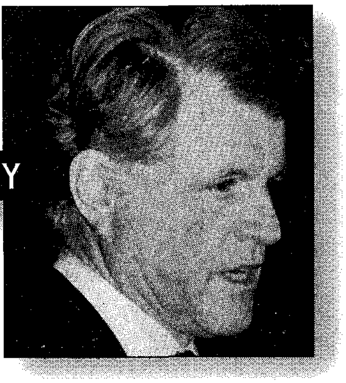
Yet the adverse publicity—augmented lately, and inevitably, by Ralph Nader's trumpetings—has terrified bankers. Lenders are bending rules that limit mortgage payments and other charges to a specific fraction of the borrower's income. Some, like NationsBank, go so far as to count food stamps and welfare benefits as income of minority mortgage applicants. Wells Fargo pays a bonus to any employee who brings in a customer from a low-income neighborhood to its mortgage department.

And the bottom line? There are several. Other things being equal, banks will be less profitable, savers less well rewarded, federal insurance schemes shakier, the economy slower. Devalued too will be the efforts made by many black people in hard circumstances to meet demanding credit standards—and so the incentives for others to do the same. Why try hard when trying easy is enough?

They Don't Embarrass Easy

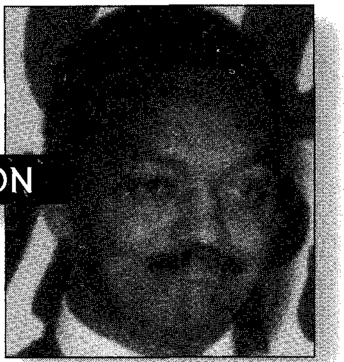
WE HAVE written harshly in the past ("The Week," July 19) about the EPA's manipulation of science to justify its imperial agenda. As if control over rivers, wetlands, trash, chemicals, and outdoor air were not enough, the agency seems determined to gain authority to regulate indoor air as well. It is revealing that some of the harshest criticism of the EPA's classification of environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) as a Group A carcinogen has come from scientists within the EPA.

Representative Tim Valentine, chairman of the environmental subcommittee of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, has released a bunch of internal EPA documents showing how the political operators there tried to ignore the criticisms. An April 27, 1990, report from EPA's Environmental Criteria and Assessment Office (ECAO) says that studies of the health effects of second-hand smoke reflect limited evidence of human carcinogenicity and recommends that it not be classified as a Group A carcinogen. The ECAO scientists recommended major revisions of the EPA report, given the inher-



TED KENNEDY

ANITA HILL



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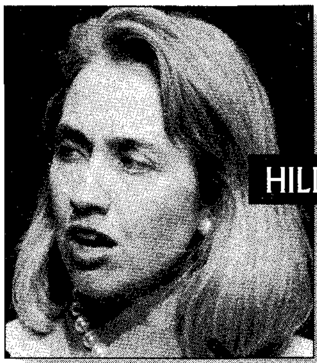

HILLARY CLINTON

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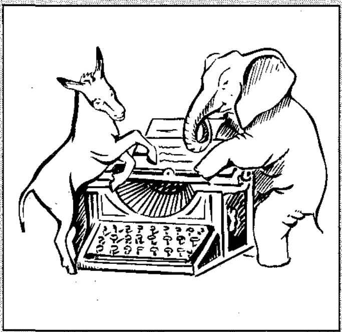
POLITICAL NOTEBOOK

■ **OHIO**: Bernardine Healy, former director of the National Institutes of Health, will run for Howard Metzenbaum's Senate seat when he retires at term's end. Ohio's GOP executive director Rex Elsass has resigned to manage her exploratory committee, and other liberal Republicans are lining up behind her.



Fine, except that Mrs. Healy is not even a registered Republican. A senior Bush official reports that HHS Secretary Louis Sullivan had to *order* her not to meet with Al Gore during the 1992 campaign. Mrs. Healy was later mentioned as Ross Perot's possible running mate. Yet, according to Evans & Novak, Phil Gramm and his staff at the National Republican Senatorial Committee support her because they feel a need for more pro-choice women.

The current GOP front-runner, Lieutenant Governor Mike DeWine, seems the natural selection for both philosophical conservatives and politically expedient Republicans. (He lost to John Glenn in 1992 in a three-way race, and the rule in Ohio politics of late is that you have to lose a big one before you win.) But three-term State Senator Eugene Watts, a conservative well known statewide, is also eyeing the seat. As lieutenant governor, Mr. DeWine is the favorite of Governor George Voinovich. But either conservative would benefit from the strength of Governor Voinovich, a former Cleveland mayor who won over the city's Democrats when he ran for the statehouse in 1990—the key to Republican victory in a state that has always been split between Democrats in the northeast around Cleveland, and Republicans in the south and west.

Mr. Metzenbaum's son-in-law, Joel Hyatt, an establishment Democrat with no redeeming features, is the likely opponent. A Healy–Hyatt race would let voters reject Liberalism in One Family. DeWine or Watts would let them reject liberalism.

■ **ARIZONA:** Arizona is arguably the most conservative state in the union. Dennis DeConcini has survived as senator only because he manages to hold the label "conservative Democrat" everywhere but in his voting record (ACU: 20). He was not helped by his association with Charles Keating.

In the recent budget vote he was forced to gamble with his future. The dilemma: sink the President but represent the interests of your state; or vote for the budget and pray for an economic recovery. He was coddled for a week by the President, who eventually made an ambiguous promise in return for the senator's support. A no vote by Mr. DeConcini would have changed the outcome.

Before Republicans get a whack at him next November, the beleaguered senator has to contend with a primary challenge from Arizona Secretary of State Richard Mahoney. That is a courageous undertaking considering that Mr. Mahoney's sister has worked in Senator DeConcini's D.C. office during all three terms, and his father helped run the senator's initial campaign 17 years ago.

If Mr. DeConcini survives that civil war, he has a formidable Republican challenger in Representative Jon Kyl (ACU: 96), an energetic three-term legislator and an effective champion for a strong foreign policy, supply-side economics, and a family-oriented cultural agenda. Most recently, he has been looking into market-oriented health-care plans. With John McCain as junior senator already, the prospects look good for a solid Republican delegation.

■ **CALIFORNIA:** While the Golden State will also have an interesting senatorial contest next year, the more immediate battle is over Proposition 174, on the ballot this November. It would give tuition vouchers worth $2,600—paid from public-education funds—to parents who want to send children to private schools.

The California Teachers Association is expected to pour $14 million into a campaign against it. American Federation of Teachers President Albert Shanker has charged—with woeful math—that the plan would rob public schools of $10,400 per student who transferred to private school. Another spokesman for the opposition says: "You will have all kinds of political and religious schools opening up. A science course could be teaching kids how to make Molotov cocktails."

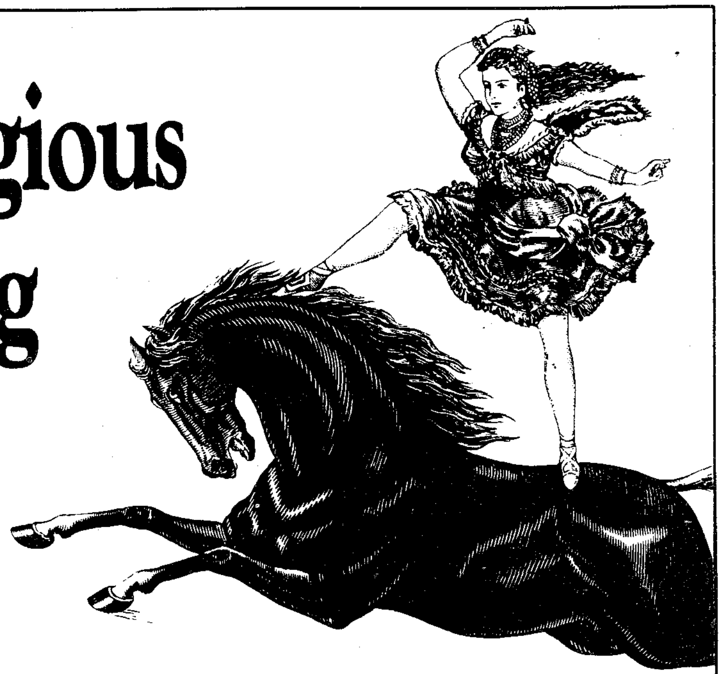
If instruction in explosives won't draw parents out of public schools, a California school system with more non-teachers than teachers and the nation's seventh highest drop-out rate will drive them out. There is strong support among parents of public-school students, and plenty of schools to put those kids into without exceeding the $2,600 voucher. Hence, the considerable panic among the political classes.

Chief panicker is Republican Majority Coalition chairman Tom Campbell. Mr. Campbell, as a candidate for the State Senate, has come out against the initiative, after having voiced his support just a few weeks back—it seems the CTA has many members in his district. Longtime supporter Milton Friedman wrote in an open letter: "To me, you seem to be sacrificing principle to political advantage, to an unwillingness to face the opposition of the powerful special-interest groups."

One poll shows Proposition 174 running about even among those who have heard about it. But supporters ("Yes on 174," 2250 E. Imperial Highway, #220, El Segundo, Calif. 90245; 800-765-3363) will likely be outspent 5 to 1. Former Education Secretary William Bennett (with help from his Empower America partner Jack Kemp) is camping out in California to raise funds, change minds, and beat down the education lobby. The task is nothing less than wresting control of education from the bureaucrats and unions and returning it to families—$2,600 at a time.

—GEOFFREY MORRIS & RICH LOWRY

How to Be Religious Without Losing Your Mental Balance



The myth persists that religion is the preserve of the gullible, irrational, and fanatical. Yet, from Harvard to Berkeley, and among inquisitive people generally, there's an undeniable renewal of interest in traditional religion. This fascination is largely the result of the failure of secular substitutes for religion (such as positivism, hedonism, consumerism, technological utopianism, and Marxism) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: evil, goodness, suffering, love, death, and the meaning of it all. Contrary to stereotypes, this religious renaissance does not imply an indifference to peace, justice, and human dignity; nor does it signify a hostility to science, only an appreciation of the limits of science and technology.

We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW are spearheading today's intellectual engagement with the sacred. Among other things, we scrutinize the religious dimensions of the great events and issues of the past and present, and probe the wisdom offered not only by the Bible and Church fathers, but also by such giants as St. Francis, Aquinas, Dante, Kierkegaard, Newman, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Bonhoeffer, Barth, Niebuhr, Gandhi, Buber, Auden, Eliot, Silone, Merton, Schumacher, Maritain, Mauriac, Weil, Thomas More, Dorothy Day, C.S. Lewis, and Flannery O'Connor.

An ecumenical monthly edited by lay Catholics, we've been characterized by George Will as "splendid," by the University of Chicago's Martin Marty as "lively," by *Newsweek* as "thoughtful," by *Library Journal* as "brilliant," and by Christopher Derrick, England's foremost Catholic apologist, as "by far the best Catholic magazine in the English-speaking world." Frankly, we're "influential," to quote the *Los Angeles Times*.

We publish Protestants, Catholics, Anglicans, Eastern Orthodox, Jews, and an occasional nonbeliever. Writers who've appeared in our pages include such diversely penetrating intellects as Robert Bellah, Christopher Lasch, Jean Bethke Elshtain, John T. Noonan Jr., Daniel Bell, Thomas Molnar, Robert Coles, Irving Howe, Walker Percy, John Lukacs, Henri Nouwen, Avery Dulles, and Sheldon Vanauken. We bat around a wide variety of issues and defy easy ideological pigeonholing. We'll keep you on your toes!

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ent limitations of the data and the comparative novelty of the approach used to interpret the data. That novelty consisted of a huge array of statistical manipulations including exclusion of major studies that inconveniently indicated no health effects, suspension of usual standards for avoiding chance association (confidence intervals), and failure to consider confounding factors.

A March 23, 1992, review by ECAO epidemiologist Patricia A. Murphy characterizes the EPA report as poorly organized and badly argued, and says that the case for a causal relationship between lung cancer and ETS is overstated. She notes there is no consideration of what epidemiologists call the "file-drawer problem" (the tendency of researchers to leave in the file drawer reports of research that finds no-relationship). Thus, according to Dr. Murphy, the process of "meta-analysis," which tries to weigh the results of all the published reports, is inherently biased in the direction of finding a relationship. The report on ETS was entirely meta-analysis of a selection of old studies that had found no more than a weak relationship between ETS and disease.

One ECAO reviewer says part of the draft EPA report is plagiarism from an article in a 1990 issue of the journal *Risk Analysis*. He adds: "This could be a source of embarrassment, as there are surely many people familiar with this article who will also be reading this EPA document." But the EPA apparently is beyond embarrassment.

Middle East Breakthrough?

WE CROSS our fingers, praying that the new agreement unveiled between Israel and the Palestinians turns out to be the breakthrough to peace that it is claimed to be. On the face of it, the plan incorporates key ideas that have been part of Israeli (and U.S.) policy for years—a transitional phase of self-government for Palestinians in the occupied territories, leaving the toughest issues of sovereignty and territorial partition for subsequent negotiations; limited redeployments of Israeli troops, while Israel retains responsibility for overall military security in the transitional phase; no change in the status of the Israeli settlements in the territories. What's new is that a rapid turnover of powers will take place initially in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank town of Jericho, to jump-start negotiations.

The other new wrinkle—and here our concerns begin—is that the deal was worked out in secret talks between Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and a senior representative of the PLO.

For 15 years, U.S. and Israeli policy has been to empower the residents of the occupied territories, precisely in order to *diminish* the influence of the PLO, now headquartered in Tunis. The PLO was for decades an ally of the Soviet Union; in the Gulf War it aligned itself with Saddam Hussein. It has never convincingly distanced itself from terrorism; and it has a nearly unbroken record of sabotaging peace negotiations because it cared more about ensuring a role for itself than about achieving progress for the Palestinians.

Has anything happened to justify this reversal of U.S. and Israeli policy? The accord's defenders point to the inability of the residents of the territories to put forward realistic proposals; they call attention to new promises by the PLO to alter its viciously anti-Zionist charter and to accept Israel's existence. They focus on the PLO's strategic weakness in the wake of the Soviet collapse and the cut-off of Gulf Arab financing; they cite the new willingness of the PLO to accept that any territory liberated from Israel will be confederated with Jordan (another long-standing U.S. and Israeli preference). And the rise of the Islamic fundamentalist movement in the territories frightens the secular PLO as much as it frightens Israel. Indeed, hard-line Palestinian radicals are denouncing the accord as a sell-out.

These are all worthwhile considerations. They are also factors subject to change, some to overnight change. But the surrender of territory, however modest, can be reversed only by war—and Israel has almost no geographical margin for error.

In Israel, battle lines are forming, as the opposition Likud Party and settlers' groups organize to oppose the accord. The Rabin government has a razor-thin majority in the Knesset. As diplomacy with the PLO unfolds, we will find out soon whether the gamble was wise, in either politics or diplomacy.

Laura Tyson's Tall Tale

WHEN President Clinton's eye settled on Berkeley economist Laura Tyson as head of his Council of Economic Advisors, Llewellyn Rockwell criticized her writings on Nicolae Ceausescu's economic policies (*NR*, Feb. 1).

Her reaction, we have learned late in the day, was to deny she had ever written on Rumania. Here's the exchange with host Brian Wilson on "Fox Morning News" (March 10), from a Reuter Transcript Report:

> WILSON: A man named Rockwell, Llewellyn H. Rockwell, wrote in the NATIONAL REVIEW about something that you wrote in 1984, and he says, "from her published writings, it's difficult to escape the conclusion that Professor Tyson's ideal in economics is Eastern European socialism, especially of the Ceausescu variety." In other words, what he said is you liked what you saw going on in Rumania, and he says that perhaps you care more for

those systems than others. Do you think that's a cheap shot?

TYSON: I think that's an extremely cheap shot. First of all, there's some confusion here. I actually didn't work on Rumania. I worked on Yugoslavia, and Tito, not Ceausescu. My work on Eastern Europe was very critical. It had to do with what was wrong with Eastern Europe and how they needed to reform themselves to avoid the crisis that they finally found themselves in. So it's both misinformed and incorrect about what my analysis suggested.

But if Professor Tyson "didn't work on Rumania," then the Webbs didn't work on the Soviet Union, to mention another piece of scholarship the Left would like to forget. To refresh her memory, chapter three (pp. 73 to 101) of her *Economic Adjustment in Eastern Europe* (Rand Corporation, 1984)—listed on page three of her curriculum vitae under "Books"—is entitled "Economic Adjustment in Rumania."

On pages 73 to 75, Professor Tyson praises the "Rumanian leadership" for economic policies she freely admits "reflected the Stalinist development strategy" of "rapid economic growth emphasizing industrialization, based on the rapid transfer of agricultural labor reserves to industry and on a major investment effort." As a result, "by 1974, Rumania's investment effort, expressed as a share of net material product, was the highest in the bloc and perhaps in the world. In both industry and agriculture, this massive investment effort was sustained by a policy of real income control that suppressed consumption growth and kept levels low."

Did Ceausescu's "massive investment effort" include foreign capital? A protectionist herself, Professor Tyson reassures us that "overall trade dependence remained low, compared with that of countries of similar development level, reflecting Rumania's stated preference for self-sufficiency and autarky."

Industry not only boomed, according to Professor Tyson, but after 1970, so did agriculture. "The new measures accelerated agricultural growth and improved agricultural incentives by adjusting rules and conditions for calculating incomes in collective agriculture to reduce rural–urban earnings differentials. Pensions, sick leave, and other social benefits were improved, and guaranteed minimum incomes were introduced for collective workers."

The result, she says on page 98, was "dazzling growth rates." Rumania "has been remarkably successful at mobilizing the kind of domestic austerity measures that are required for rapid short-term improvements in the balance of payments. To date, moreover, these measures have not led to any significant threat to the continued domination of the Ceausescu regime." All this was, of course, an absurd fantasy. Rumania was one of the poorest countries in the Eastern bloc. Its economic statistics bore no relationship to the lives of its people. As a result, not long after Miss Tyson's book was written, there was a rapid short-term deterioration in Rumania's political structure and in Ceausescu's health.

Still. National service, government spending as investment, equalized incomes, mandated social benefits, protectionism, and austerity. It all sounds awfully familiar.

Fat and Still Growing

The deficit-reduction joke
  Did not go over big
When voters peering in the poke
  Discovered it's a pig
Whose appetite potential, plus
  Alarming bands of flab,
Alerted Mr. Dole to cuss
  At Mr. Clinton's tab.

W. H. VON DREELE

NOTES & ASIDES

■ Memo to: JO'S
From: WFB

Dear John:

An intriguing question, as posed on the cover: *Who* did *what* to R. W. B. Lewis?

At the very least, the following pages tell of a striking change in attitude. A distinguished academic figure was on the scene at Yale University in 1970. He was deeply distressed by the activity of students and others who, protesting the Black Panther trial, suppressed any dissent from their own position. A generation later, Professor Lewis cites as the historical phenomenon most obnoxious in his eyes the simultaneous activity of—anti-Communists. He denounces such activity as seen through the eyes of Gore Vidal—who cites me as an example of the kind of thing he objects to.

During the Cold War, the "anti-Communists" supported, with this difference or that on tactical matters, the doctrine of containment, as laid down by President Truman and pursued by his successors. That doctrine was primarily strategic in character—the Soviet expansionists would not be permitted to march into Western Europe—but it was grounded in moral reasoning. The anti-Communists deplored the totalitarian way: the killings, the concentration camps, the suppression of civil liberties. By contrast, the anti-anti-Communists were eager to come to terms with Soviet hegemony. It wasn't only "Star Wars" they opposed; some anti-anti's opposed, really, any organized resistance. Gore Vidal, in numerous emissions, opposed, it is reasonable to generalize, all military organization aimed at containing what he considered to be an insubstantial threat. The Communist threat was, for him, primarily the creature of corporate fancy.

We are, I think, entitled to wonder whether Professor Lewis's extraordinary endorsement of the Vidal position presages a cultural revisionism. If so it would be a change of enormous cultural consequence. The Solzhenitsyns and Koestlers would freeze into history as the moral blind men, deferring to the strategic foresight and moral pre-eminence of such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Pablo Picasso, and other fellow-travelers and accommodationists.

The letters below, which record a genial exchange in the years 1969–1970, become now the incongruous backdrop of a thorough alteration not only in view, but in manners, by a scholar who would have been considerably impoverished if persons he had approached to help him get the story of Edith Wharton had treated him as he now treats (some) others. It is a very curious story, and not one I think I can explain. Maybe one of our readers will have a key to the mystery. Cordially, Bill

1993

An excerpt from a review by Professor R. W. B. Lewis of United States: Essays 1952–1992, *by Gore Vidal, published in the* New York Times Book Review, *June 20, 1993.*

We are provided with a full display of Mr. Vidal's social and political opinions. The moment I salute most warmly is his memory (and ours) of a televised "live chat" with William F. Buckley Jr. at the Republican National Convention in 1968, when Mr. Vidal, as he says, "came close to revealing what I really am: a dedicated anti-anti-Communist." Say it again.

Here is the passage from Mr. Vidal's book to which Professor Lewis refers.

I was made aware of the iron rules in 1968, when William F. Buckley Jr. and I had our first live chat on ABC at the Republican Convention in Miami Beach. I was billed as the conservative; he as the pro-crypto—or, was it the other way around? Anyway, we were hired to play the opinion game in order to divert the audience from the issues. Buckley Junior's idea of a truly deep in-depth political discussion is precisely that of corporate America. First, the Democrat must say that the election of a Republican will lead to a depression. Then the Republican will joyously say, Ah Hah, but the Democrats always lead us into war! After a few minutes of this, *my* attention span snapped. I said that there was no difference at all between the two parties because the same corporations paid for both, usually with taxpayers' money, tithed, as it were, from the faithful and then given to "defense," which in turn passes it on to those candidates who will defend the faith. With that bit of news for the national audience, I revealed myself not only as an apostate to the national religion; I came close to revealing what I really am: a dedicated anti-anti-Communist, a category far more vile to the true believer than a mere Communist. Although my encounters with Buckley Junior got ABC its highest ratings, I was seen no more at election times. Last year, Peter Jennings proposed to ABC that, for old times' sake, it might be a good idea to have me on. "No," he was told. "He'll just be outrageous."

> "To maintain a 35-year arms race it is necessary to have a fearsome enemy. Not since the invention of the Wizard of Oz have American publicists created anything quite so demented as the idea that the Soviet Union is a monolithic, omnipotent empire with tentacles everywhere on earth, intent on our destruction, which will surely take place unless we constantly imitate it with our war machine and its secret services."
> —Gore Vidal, in *The Nation*, January 11, 1986

1969–70

The first letter in this exchange is dated less than one year after the encounter on ABC television between Gore Vidal and Buckley Junior, referred to above.

Yale University
Calhoun College
Office of the Master
June 10, 1969

Dear Mr. Buckley:

I write to try, once again, to persuade you to visit Calhoun College, for as long as you can manage it. Any time between October 1 and December 10 would be fine for us. We would love to have you here for several days, but will accept whatever amount of time you can give us.

You may perhaps recall my writing a couple of years ago to invite you to come as the first of our Napier visiting fellows. You couldn't make it at that time (Murray Kempton and Norman Mailer, among others, have since come to us under the Napier auspices). The present invitation would combine the Napier title with that of Poynter—the latter being the name of a donor of funds to bring distinguished journalists to the Yale Campus.

The idea would be to meet with a series of fairly small groups, mostly of students, for quite informal talks, mostly about the profession of journalism. You

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never acknowledged the book [*Rumbles Left & Right*] I sent you a couple of years ago!), and say: 1) I will, if you want me, go to New Haven in the spring, to dine with you and the fellows, and participate in whatever you desire after dinner, preferably something small (definitely not a public appearance); 2) you may remit such pence as I earn on that occasion to whoever in Calhoun needs a little financial help. Okay?

Yours faithfully,
(s) Bill

P.S. Don't tell John Hersey [the Master of Pearson College]. I just turned him down.

June 18, 1969

Dear Bill:

I'm still reeling from the results of the New York primary (your analysis of which I look forward to reading) [John Marchi, running as a primary candidate, defeated Mayor John Lindsay for the Republican nomination. Lindsay would go on to win in November on the Liberal line]; but your letter this morning, with the accompanying remarks, went far to saving the day.

It is joyful to know that you can give us an evening next spring. I'll get on to details thereof soon after I return in January. A dinner with the Fellows and an informal session afterwards with a relatively few students (in our living room)—that sounds very fine.

Your sensitive and witty remarks about technology, the occasional uses of reason, and divergent idealisms are much appreciated. Also your embarrassingly accurate memory: I received your book, read most of it, enjoyed it all—and caddishly failed to acknowledge. Herewith many thanks, a couple of years late.

Keep to schedule. I will meditate your twenty-hour weekends from a Tuscan hilltop, in a place called the Villa Boccaccio.

Best wishes—
(s) Dick Lewis

November 20, 1969

Dear Bill:

I am glad that Tony Dolan [future Chief Speechwriter for President Reagan; winner of the Pulitzer Prize for investigative journalism, 1978] continues to act as a bridge between Calhoun College and your office. As the enclosed letter will indicate [there is no copy in the files of this letter] we are very serious in our interest in having you come as a Napier Fellow, the most distinguished visiting appointment that we have.

My term as Acting Master draws to an end in January and I would be more than pleased if you could come during my stint as Master. I might even question you about how much you remember of History of Music 10.

Cordially,
(s) Bill Waite
William G. Waite
Acting Master

December 3, 1969

Dear Mr. Waite:

How good to hear from you and how much I appreciate your patience with me. But when I replied to Mr. Lewis I gave him April or May, and I am spent during the month of April. So will you indulge me? How pleasant it will be to have a chance again to see you, and to thank you again for your wonderful instruction while I was your student.

Yours faithfully,
(s) Bill
Wm. F. Buckley Jr.

December 8, 1969

Dear Bill:

How pleasant to get your reply and to know that you will be coming to Calhoun in May. I am sure that almost any time would be satisfactory except for College Weekend, which you will remember does not lend itself to serious discussions. It would appear that the very best period would be from May 4 to 14. Let us know what day you would prefer.

I have been giving Tony Dolan tutoring in his music theory, much to the amusement of both of us.

Sincerely,
(s) Bill

December 31, 1969

Dear Mr. Waite:

Many thanks for your letter to Mr. Buckley and my apologies for the delay in replying. Mr. Buckley has been in Southeast Asia and the West Coast and did not see your letter until this morning. He telephoned me from out of town and asked me to advise you that he could be at Calhoun College on May 7th, from noon until midnight. I hope that date will be convenient to you.

Yours faithfully,
(s) Frances Bronson
Secretary

March 2, 1970

Dear Mr. Buckley:

Soon after settling back here, I found your correspondence with Bill Waite (now on leave in the West Indies), with the happy assurance from Miss Bronson that you can visit Calhoun in May—"from noon till midnight." The date proposed, Thursday May 7th, is fine, from our point of view . . .

Can you spend the night? I'll reserve the Calhoun Guest Suite, just in case and in hopes.

I enjoyed and admired what I saw of you (I came in late) on the TV vivisection of Al Capp.

Regards,
(s) Dick Lewis

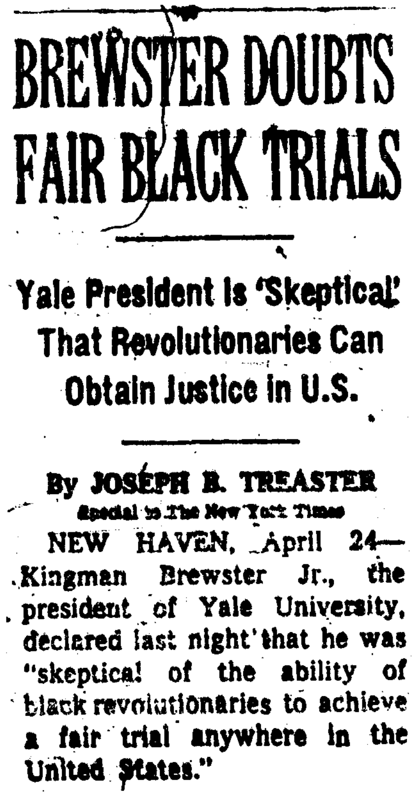
April 1, 1970

Dear Mr. Lewis:

. . . I understand that April 24th will be fine with you. [May 7th was now excluded; I had to go to Moscow for the USIA.] Somewhere along the line we ought to have a telephone conversation about what you have in mind for me. I'll buzz you in the next couple of weeks. Meanwhile if you should find yourself in New York, I would be delighted to lunch with you.

Yours cordially,
(s) Bill

The dramatic events at Yale on April 24–25 were headline news around the country. They traced to the forthcoming trial in New Haven of Black Panther Chief Bobby Seale, the protests over that trial by much of the student body, and the inflammatory statement by President Kingman Brewster of Yale to the effect that the trial would not be—could not be—"fair." In the May 18 issue of Newsweek, *Stewart Alsop devoted his column to the events, under the title, "Yale and the Deadly Danger." He began by citing two "items," as follows:*



BREWSTER DOUBTS FAIR BLACK TRIALS

Yale President Is 'Skeptical' That Revolutionaries Can Obtain Justice in U.S.

By JOSEPH B. TREASTER
Special to The New York Times

NEW HAVEN, April 24—Kingman Brewster Jr., the president of Yale University, declared last night that he was "skeptical of the ability of black revolutionaries to achieve a fair trial anywhere in the United States."

Item one is a faintly incredible account of a speech to a mass rally of Yale students by David Hilliard, chief of staff of the Black Panthers [as reported in the *Yale Daily News*]. "Hilliard drew boos from the crowd when he spoke of 'killing pigs' and responded to the audience by shouting, 'Boo me, I knew you motherf-----s were racist!' But Hilliard won back the sympathy of the crowd when he pointed out that booing was not a tactic for intelligent people. At that point the majority of the audience applauded Hilliard . . ."

Item two is a rather good-humored letter to the *News* from the conservative columnist and Yale graduate William Buckley, recounting how he had been warned not to keep a speaking engagement on the Yale campus on the grounds that his 'physical safety' could not be guaranteed . . ."

What follows is the column by WFB, as it appeared in the Yale Daily News, *May 9[?], 1970.*

To the Editors of the *News*:

Permit me to intrude upon the general composure with a comment, partly personal. Many many months ago, succumbing to the entreaties of Mr. R. W. B. Lewis (as who would not), I agreed to go to Calhoun College for a full day, to talk with the students and fellows there about whatever the students and fellows there wanted to talk to me about.

A few days before my scheduled arrival last Friday, Mr. Lewis telephoned to say that he wanted to "think about thinking" whether to withdraw the invitation for that day—because of the tension on campus. I told him I was used to tension on campuses, and went so far as to suggest that under the special circumstances, if he thought it appropriate, I would [agree to] appear before the Political Union, where I would joyously defend the proposition that the Black Panther Party I know and have read about *should* be repressed.

Mr. Ralph Gerson, the President of the Union, asked for a day or two to think it over. He called me on the morning after his experiences with Senator Kennedy [on April 23] and told me that he did not think the climate propitious for the ventilation of such views as my own, or for that matter, any views on sanity's side of Mr. [William Sloane] Coffin's (the characterizations are needless to say mine, not Mr. Gerson's); indeed he said he was not sure that he could guarantee my physical safety.

At that point Mr. Lewis called me and told me that Senator Kennedy had failed [even] to show up, as scheduled, at Calhoun College after his speech to the Political Union, so harassed did he feel; and that under the circumstances, Mr. Lewis recommended against my going to Calhoun [the next day].

I remember a few years ago when, after the bombing of a Birmingham church, Governor George Wallace was told by Mayor Lee [of New Haven] that he must not risk an appearance on the Yale campus . . . Now I note that the freedoms once denied to Mr. Wallace are, by the exercise of revolutionary logic, denied to Senator Kennedy and myself. Resulting in the piquancy that the people that America is allegedly repressing are enjoying the freedom to move about and speak their thoughts, while the oppressors, from such distant corners of the spectrum as are occupied by Senator Kennedy and myself, are denied that freedom.

Not a very great privation for the principals: Mr. Kennedy and I are not without forums for our views.

But there is surely something to be said about the freedom of the members of the Political Union, to say nothing of the freedom of the poor fellows of Calhoun College, who must at this point be wondering whether they would be permitted, by Revolutionary Justice, to listen to a speech by Rowan and Martin [the hosts of *Laugh-In*].

I just thought you'd like to know. Yours faithfully,

Wm. F. Buckley Jr.

May 4[?], 1970

Dear Mr. Lewis:

I felt (as Whittaker Chambers once put it in a letter to me) a Cromwellian aftertaste following on our [telephone] conversation, and I'm sorry about that. My view of Norman Mailer [with whom Professor Lewis had suggested a joint appearance in the fall] is complicated. If it is at all convenient, take a look at my essay on him in *Rumbles Left & Right*. That was the opening statement of a debate we had in Chicago, which was reproduced whole in *Playboy* (1962). I don't really think that we engaged each other. Now, having said that, I remember a comment by Murray Kempton, which was to the effect that when I debated with Mailer, it was a fight between us to save one another's souls, whereas when I debated with John Lindsay, I was innocently engaged in the same thing, while John was engaged in making constituents. If Kempton is right, then Mailer is right for you in Calhoun. At this point I am willing to say that I will cooperate in anything you suggest, provided that the audience is small. I.e., I do not want one of those spectaculars. a) I loathe them; therefore b) I do them only for spectacular profits, which alas are never spectacular enough to sustain my beloved NATIONAL REVIEW.

I found myself itchy to write a little something about the events between us, which I have done in the form of a letter to the *Yale Daily News*, copy attached. I don't think there is anything there that will offend you. I hope not. On the other hand, have you noticed how easy it is to offend some people these days? I learn from somebody that Vincent Scully [professor of art] offended a black student recently by referring to him as "Mr." Which reminds me, if I am supposed to refer to you other than as Mr. Lewis, advise me.

My best to you,
(s) Bill

May 7, 1970

Dear Bill:

I much admire, and am grateful for, the grace with which you responded to the sticky situation here a couple of weeks ago. It is a sign of the times that if you had come up, I personally wouldn't have seen more than ten minutes of you—there was an emergency meeting Friday afternoon of the Council of Masters that lasted till nearly seven, and then another meeting here (for the life of me, I can't remember what it was about) that began at seven thirty and went on forever.

Another sign is my inability to answer—long before this—your letter, brought back by hand by Ralph Gerson. The letter to the *News* contained nothing that would offend anybody not so offense-prone as to be maniacal. It was also, within my knowledge, absolutely accurate. The covering letter I retain as one of the few really gratifying items to come out of the whole business. I will take your letter as sanction for inviting you next fall as early as you can make it, and on the original plan. I don't see how a Buckley–Mailer soul-saving session could help but be a spectacular, so perhaps we should forget that idea for the moment.

You kindly sent me *Rumbles* a couple of years ago. I shall re-read the section on Norman this weekend, when I fade out to Bethany where most of my books are.

Thanks again for various displays of courtesy, charm and understanding.

Best regards,
(s) Dick

P.S.—You may address me in print any way you want, but I hope that henceforth you'll address me in person as per my signature above.

1991

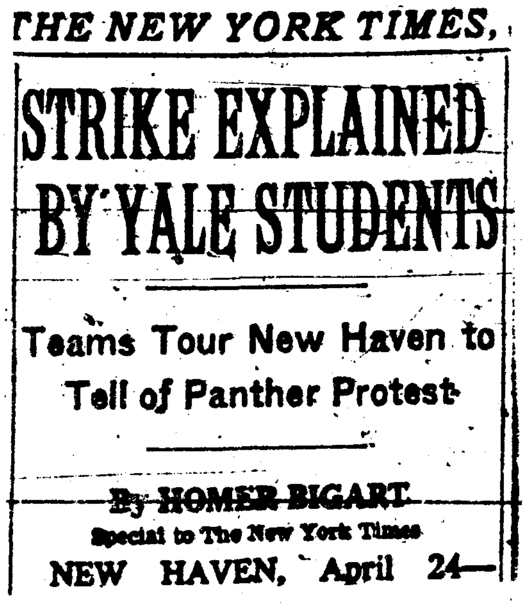
In the 21-year interval since last hearing from Professor Lewis (I never spoke at Calhoun, and there is no record of any more letters from him) I had forgotten the special geniality of our past correspondence. The letters reproduced above were retrieved from my papers at Yale. I wrote him for the first time since 1970.

August 31, 1991

Professor R. W. B. Lewis
Department of English
Yale University

Dear Mr. Lewis:

Somebody acting under the benevolent auspices of Yale U. (his name is Geoffrey Kabaservice) is after me in connection with oral histories he is doing on Messrs. Griswold and Brewster [Presidents of Yale, 1950–1977], and I have told him something the accuracy of which, on consideration, I desire to check, and only you can confirm my story (or re-educate me) on the subject.


THE NEW YORK TIMES,

STRIKE EXPLAINED BY YALE STUDENTS

Teams Tour New Haven to Tell of Panther Protest

By HOMER BIGART
Special to The New York Times

NEW HAVEN, April 24—

I told him that at least a half dozen times during 1969 and early 1970 you pressed me to accept an invitation to appear in Calhoun at a tea-seminar kind of thing, that we finally settled on a date in late April or early May, that you called me on the morning of the day I was scheduled to appear to advise me that most reluctantly you had to withdraw the invitation because (these are the words that stick in my memory) you were not certain I would be "physically safe" that day. That day being the Friday before the Chaotic Saturday, the high moment of Yale's Vietnam–Black Panther explosion. I went on to say that after the episode was over, I was rather surprised never to hear from you again notwithstanding the stamina you had shown in inviting me during the previous months. I speculated that you had in mind to invite me to be a Fellow of Calhoun, but that the weekend in question sharpened ideological or philosophical objections to me and you found it easiest to let the matter drop. All of this merely for the record, not to kindle any recriminations. By the way, if you had invited me, I'd have (most politely) declined, because already, by 1970, I had undertaken to shrink non-professional commitments. But a word from you on the narrative would be appreciated.

With best wishes, and congratulations on the reception of your work. [Professor Lewis was given the Pulitzer Prize for biography in 1976 for his book on Edith Wharton.]

Wm. F. Buckley Jr.

November 1, 1991

Dear Mr. Lewis:

I wrote to you [a few] weeks ago but haven't heard back. I am being pressed by Mr. Kabaservice, who is putting together for "The Griswold–Brewster History Foundation" (255 Whitney Avenue, Apartment 51) the colloquy we had, whose transcript is at hand.

Since the only truly interesting thing I have to say in it has to do with my personal experience, and that is in part a surmise, I am anxious not to falsify the record or to animate a historical misimpression. But I do need to hear from you. It is of course possible you didn't get my original letter and accordingly I enclose a copy.

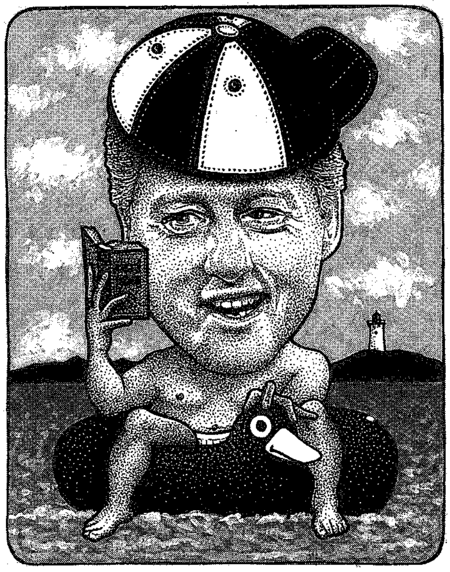
Yours faithfully,
Wm. F. Buckley Jr.

I never did hear again from Professor R. W. B. Lewis. From Dick. —**WFB**

ON THE SCENE

Letting Go

BRIT HUME



D. F. Bach

VINEYARD HAVEN, MASSACHUSETTS

THE LONG political odyssey of Bill Clinton seemed to pass a milestone of sorts, as he vacationed here on Martha's Vineyard with his wife and daughter. The frenzied pace of his first six months in office, to nearly everyone's surprise, just stopped. Mr. Clinton seemed suddenly to realize that the nation and the world could get along for days, even weeks at a time without any action by him, and, perhaps even more surprisingly, without any comment from him. He shut down and shut up.

The press corps that follows him everywhere caught glimpses of him, mostly through the TV pictures shot each day of his vacation activities. They were the images of a man ruddy from the sun and relaxed from the rest. He was doing none of what he is thought best at: thinking out loud about any and every policy issue before the nation. Ironically, he never seemed more likable and appealing.

There was something unmistakably comforting about seeing the President acting like a normal person on vacation. It's hard to tell if it was more of a relief to see him being left alone or to have him leave the rest of us alone. His most quotable comment of the week was "Whoa, Mama," shouted at his golf ball from a tee at the Farm Neck Country Club. Shades of George Bush? Not really, not when the most conspicuous member of the foursome, besides Mr. Clinton himself, was Vernon Jordan, late of the Urban League and, despite his standing as a big-time Washington lawyer, a shield against any charge that the populist President had gone high-hat on his holiday.

The choice of Martha's Vineyard, late as it was, seems in retrospect to have been inspired. It may be the one place in America Mr. Clinton could go without any danger of running into anti-tax protestors, anti-abortion protestors, or anti-gay protestors. The Vineyard is a redoubt of Sixties liberalism; even the island's one radio station plays mostly the music of that era. The waitress—pardon me, waitperson—who attended the President and his party at the fabled Black Dog Tavern said she had marched on Washington but had never before met a President. She was thrilled. So was nearly everybody else, to judge by the myriad of welcome signs posted all over the place. The only message that had even a faintly discouraging word was nailed to a tree along one of the island's byways. "Bill," it said, "we know you're trying."

Even the place where Mr. Clinton stayed seemed perfect, the private estate of Robert McNamara. Thus the onetime Vietnam War resister managed to associate himself with the man who ran the war, without breaking political ranks. McNamara of course is a Democrat. Nearly everyone here seems to be. The curator at the County Historical Museum says she was pressed into service as the Republican registrar of voters because "the last Republican on the island who could write died last year." That may be an exaggeration, but not by much. This is, after all, the vacation home of such luminaries as Carly Simon, James Taylor, William Styron, Jules Feiffer, Art Buchwald, Katharine Graham, Sheldon Hackney, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, and Spike Lee. Not many Dittoheads in that group. Such people may not be easily impressed, but one senses that they would all be giddy if Mr. Clinton chose to make this the site of his summer White House.

They certainly gave the President the full treatment. Mrs. Graham had him over twice, and Mrs. Onassis took him out for a luncheon cruise on a 70-foot yacht owned by her beau, Maurice Tempelsman, the diamond dealer. Afterward, she entertained him at her house. For Mr. Clinton, who dates his presidential ambitions from the day he met JFK in the Rose Garden during a Boys Nation photo-op, hobnobbing with his widow must have been gratifying indeed. Alas, the camera-shy Mrs. Onassis did not oblige with the kinds of consecrating poses with the President that the White House would no doubt have loved. She sent brother-in-law Ted and boyfriend Maurice out to greet the Clintons on the pier. "Welcome to Massachusetts," said Ted heartily. T. R. Reid of the *Washington Post* once described a tumescent Ted as having had "an epicurean summer." From the look of him here, he's had another one.

The summer regulars here, Vineyarders as they call themselves, do not merely regard this picturesque island as a nice place to visit. They share an almost cultish devotion to it as a sort of Nirvana. The *Vineyard Gazette*, the local paper owned by the eminent James Reston and his family, went into rhapsodies the day Mr. Clinton arrived. In a welcoming editorial, the paper said, "This place in the sea beyond the land offers a special quality of life, a certain quiet and peace . . . Ten days of vacation at the Summer White House is not much time. But the Vineyard holds out unimagined rewards for those who pause long enough to experience the beauty of this fragile land." Whew. The paper

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Mr. Hume is chief White House correspondent for ABC News.

also carried a letter to the First Family's cat. It was sent on behalf of cats abandoned here by vacationers. "As First Cat," the letter said, "could you help us, the lost, the abandoned and the hungry?" No minority, it seems, is beyond the compassion of the good people here.

After a week on the island, the White House organized a bash for the press at the sumptuous home of Interior Department aide Susie Trees. The media throng, its numbers swelled by numerous spouses and children, ate barbecue, drank, and danced on an oceanfront bluff with a stunning view of the sunset. The President patiently and good-humoredly made the rounds. This week, he admitted, had been the first time in years he had been able to sleep eight hours straight. It was also the first time in four years he had taken more than a few days off. "We took some time back in 1988, but after that we just never did," he said, shaking his head. He seemed almost mystified that he could have waited so long.

He seemed aware too that this respite had been a tonic not just for his health, but for his image as well. "I was overexposed," he said. "Sometimes less is more." He didn't say if he would come back. But on this night, with James Taylor's brother Livingston singing Sixties folk tunes, and one of the contributors who financed the party telling him the rich really are eager to pay more taxes, it was hard to imagine Mr. Clinton could find a more congenial place. □

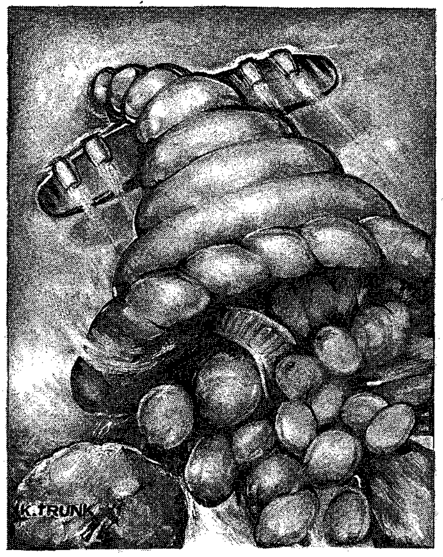
To Russia with Love

MARK CUNNINGHAM

PSKOV, RUSSIA

CHRIS CHIAIA, a 25-year-old regular guy from the idyllic suburb of Darien, Connecticut, is in charge of about $2 million worth of medicines and medical supplies in the heart of a country which is notoriously descending into chaos. It's not unusual, in the world of international aid, for young men to be out on the sharp end of things; the unusual thing is that Chris is quite on top of the job—though it undoubtedly helps that our hosts have their act very much together. These facts are not a coincidence, but rather a consequence of the way AmeriCares, the charity that employs Chris, does business.

AmeriCares put together this humanitarian aid shipment as it has well over a hundred others, worth more than $100 million, to the former Soviet Union. In the decade since it was founded, in 1982, it has sent shipments worth some $600 million worldwide. I went along as a member of the delegation that rode behind (and on top of) the cargo as we flew from Windsor Locks, Connecticut, to Vancouver, British Columbia, to St. Petersburg. When we landed, the rest of the group went off to tour hospitals AmeriCares has aided in that city; Chris stayed to oversee the unloading and follow the bulk of the aid 170 miles southwest to Pskov, a small industrial city near the Estonian border and the center of the Pskov Oblast (administrative region). I volunteered to go along and see the dirty end of the process.



Katherine Trunk

Our hosts are the Public Health Committee of the Pskov Oblast. Pskov, a Russia hand once explained to me, is to Russia as Peoria is to America. The rest of the oblast is quite rural—Melanie Barocas, a photographer who joined us later, compared it to rural Arkansas (though the buildings are much more substantial, since the climate is quite rough). The authorities and the people alike are trying to cope with the difficulties bred by seventy years' misrule, the alien challenges of freedom (a chance for the young, yet another task for the old), and the instability, sometimes verging on anarchy, caused by the lack of a fully established successor regime.

These are matters Russians must handle themselves; Americans can only provide advice (sometimes bad) and some stopgap help. The Public Health Committee's biggest problem is that supplies cannot be obtained locally: in the division of labor within the old Soviet Bloc, pharmaceutical production was the job of satellite nations; medicines from aspirin to antibiotics, not to mention surgical supplies, are now available only on the black market and priced out of reach. Pskov the city has had some help from the central Russian government and from sister cities like Roanoke, Virginia; the 600,000 people in Pskov Oblast have had nothing.

It is an awkward fact that much aid to the collapsing East has been wasted or stolen. The billions with which the West Germans bribed Mikhail Gorbachev to free their countrymen disappeared, and the same still happens with much government-to-government cash aid. Relief shipments are whittled away by a gauntlet of corruption: beyond the omnipresent and ruthless "mafias," even public employees who were honest under the old regime are resorting to theft and extortion as their salaries vanish in hyperinflation.

AmeriCares prides itself on making sure the product gets to the people it's meant for. Elisabeth Whitaker, AmeriCares' project director for the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, a daughter of diplomats, has built a network of reliable contacts throughout the region and regularly scouts it in person. The Russian Federation's Committee for Humanitarian Aid pointed her to Pskov as a region needing help; informal contacts confirmed that the Pskov authorities are sincerely trying to discharge their responsibilities. She has arranged for Sergei Albert, the deputy director of the St. Petersburg branch of the International Foundation for the Survival and Development of Humanity, to accompany us as translator, guide, and fixer. Chris, a veteran of a dozen previous airlifts, is painfully aware of the

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Mr. Cunningham is NR*'s articles editor.*

things that can go wrong; as a bonus they have me, the sort of conservative who *expects* things to go wrong.

In the event, very little does go wrong. It takes the Russians an hour or so to find an unloader that can reach our plane's main cargo section—but the Canadians had the same problem when we loaded half our cargo in Vancouver. The drive to Pskov goes off with only the slightest hitch, a jackknifed truck on the narrow highway holding up our "convoy" for a half-hour or so. We end up not unloading the trucks on arrival in Pskov—it was after midnight, and the men had already worked more than a full day—but Vladimir Labusov and Envar Esametdinov, our main contacts with the Pskov Public Health Committee, not only arrange for secure locks on the trucks and an armed guard overnight, but also for men to work on Sunday, a near-impossibility.

In fact, while Lisa Whitaker has vetted our contacts for honesty, they prove themselves excellent administrators as well: the kind who find a way to make things happen rather than the kind who tell you why nothing can be done. A dozen times Chris politely but firmly says, "We have to do this"—work on Sunday, post the guard, do the inventory *now*—and Vladimir looks briefly blank, then smiles and says, in what seems to be the only English he needs, "No problem": trucks and workers appear, a forklift, a dozen pretty clerks borrowed from "city hall," and, when it turns out the standard U.S. cargo pallet won't fit through the door of the Russian warehouse, a squad of Rangers (paratroopers) to help with the heavy unloading. In each case, I suspect, it was in fact very much a problem, but it happens, if not as smoothly as it might in Peoria, then as well as it would in New York City.

We meet, thanks to the nature of the trip, the best sort of people. Our local guide, Aleksandr Borisov, is a young specialist with the Health Committee and a member of the city parliament. Sweet and somewhat shy, earnest and quietly inventive, plainly deeply in love with his beautiful wife, Yelena, Aleksandr is the sort of fellow, along with Sergei Albert, one hopes will build the new Russia.

The only slightly sour note came at the press conference *cum* meeting of the Public Health Committee at which the shipment was officially divvied up. On behalf of Pskov city the question was raised whether some of the supplies shouldn't be diverted from the oblast to the city. Now, the package had been put together through the initiative of our friends with the oblast. They met AmeriCares's many requirements and carefully worked out their own needs; the shipment had been tailored to those needs; so there wasn't a lot of deciding left to do. The meeting had a more than passing resemblance to the old simulations of democracy: presentation, dissent, and discussion seemed rehearsed and stilted. These were good people doing good work; it is disheartening that the apparent consideration of a foregone conclusion is the only form of public discourse they know.

Such concerns are outside AmeriCares' purview: the charity can and should ensure only that the authorities will let it help save lives. Without this iron focus, I would not have had the opportunity to share a drink or twelve with Andrei, the officer in charge of our Ranger detachment, or witnessed the most beautiful smile I

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will likely ever see, on the face of Vera Vasilieva, one of the Sisters of Mercy (nurses) in the village of Strugi Krasnia, as we unloaded material at its final destination.

Actually, one aspect of AmeriCares cannot help being political after a fashion: its example. It is a fully private charity, taking virtually no government funds and desiring none; while it deals with governments, it insists on finding individuals to take responsibility for its aid. By showing what free, private men can do and treating its contacts as active citizens rather than as bureaucrats, it quietly inspires imitation in lands where governments have crushed the habit of private association and initiative.

A related advantage is the type of charity AmeriCares engages in: humanitarian aid, targeted carefully at areas struck by disaster. In part because of the example of Somalia, we are now coming to grips with the dependency problem in international "relief" efforts as well as in domestic welfare programs: at times during the Eighties, aid accounted for two-thirds of Somalia's economy. Farmers couldn't sell their produce because of the abundance of free food, and a quarter of the population, unemployable, moved to Mogadishu, itself rebuilt and vastly enlarged by international "development" projects: a death trap set by good intentions.

Such ambitious projects also leave a mark on the giver, transforming a charity into a bureaucracy which places a premium on its own growth rather than its mission. James Maguire described such scandals at Catholic Relief Services (*NR*, July 3, 1987); the recent United Way revelations are to the point. So too is the mess at the European Bank for Recovery and Development, an international government-aid agency that under Jacques Attali, a French Socialist, spent more money on refurbishing its offices than on anything else.

While AmeriCares' offices in New Canaan, Connecticut, are nice enough, it's a leaner operation altogether, administrative overhead runs well under 2 per cent of its budget (for comparison, American Red Cross's overhead was over 8 per cent in 1991). Neither CEO Bob Macauley nor his board members receive pay or perks; indeed they have donated about $3 million of their own money. Guy Smith, a board member, and Chuck Gianci and Bob Starkey, reps from Kendall Healthcare and Schering-Plough, two of the many pharmaceutical companies that donated supplies, rode in the back of the plane with the rest of us.

Finally, and not unrelated to all of the above, AmeriCares is about as entrepreneurial as a charity can get. There's precious little gladhanding. Rather, AmeriCares bulls ahead, forcing issues and cutting red tape. On a number of occasions it has had a plane in the air, sometimes past the point of no return, before the host government has agreed to let the plane land; on the Pskov trip, we got our visas *after* landing, unheard of in Russia. Thanks to this ethic, AmeriCares beat just about everybody, especially the U.S. Government, to the scene after Hurricane Andrew hit Florida. Because it is so effective, it is growing prodigiously; it doubled in size, measured by pounds or by dollar value delivered, from 1990 to 1992. And it is run by an entrepreneur: Mr. Macauley is a self-made millionaire. The staff I met even exhibits the steep learning curves of high-growth industries—where else do you see 25-year-olds handling $2-million responsibilities? ☐

NAFTA: Can Clinton Lead?

VIN WEBER

WASHINGTON, D.C.

BACK IN JUNE, Lee Hamilton (D., Ind.), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, complained that the White House was not doing enough to fight for the North American Free Trade Agreement, the trade pact that would link the economies of Canada, the U.S., and Mexico: "NAFTA will be a lost cause if the campaign for it does not begin soon and in earnest." In the months since, the White House has done nothing. Though President Clinton, like Presidents Reagan and Bush before him, presents the accord as a vital first step in building a hemispheric free-trade zone, his words have yet to be matched by action.

The treaty's opponents—a coalition of environmentalists (Sierra Club, Greenpeace, etc.), organized labor (Teamsters, AFL-CIO), so-called "public-interest groups" (Ralph Nader's Public Citizen, Ross Perot's United We Stand America), and protectionist conservatives (Representative Duncan Hunter, Pat Buchanan)—have been campaigning hard. Electrical Workers President William Bywater summed up their message to Congress recently on CNN: "Anybody that votes for this agreement, we're going to go out and defeat. Period." Perot has just released a new book, *Save Your Job, Save Our Country: Why NAFTA Must Be Stopped Now*, and is threatening to use his organization to defeat House Members who vote for the pact.

The White House has done little to provide political cover for members wavering under this pressure; it seems to be paralyzed by the intense opposition to the accord on the part of key Democratic constituencies like labor and the greens (organized labor was the second largest contributor of "soft money" to the Democratic National Committee during last year's campaign). Instead of defending the original pact, the Administration strategy has been to negotiate supplemental agreements with Mexico and Canada to satisfy these groups' concerns, and then try to sell them on a new, improved "NAFTA Plus" (thus conceding the opponents' arguments). The key to this strategy was getting Representative Dick Gephardt (D., Mo.), the point man in Congress for labor and environmentalists, to drop his opposition to the pact.

This strategy seems to have backfired. No sooner had trade representative Mickey Kantor announced agreement on the side accords than Gephardt was pronouncing them "deficient" and telling reporters he would continue to oppose the pact. Now, it was improbable that labor and environmental groups would ever have come around to supporting NAFTA. By wasting months pandering to them, the White House has gained nothing, while allowing NAFTA opponents to define the accord as a "job-kil-

Mr. Weber, a former congressman from Minnesota, is co-founder of Empower America.

ler” and giving them a long head start in the battle for public opinion. Worse still, it has given fresh ammunition to anti-NAFTA Republicans, who were making little headway with a protectionist case; they are now using the side agreements to paint the accord as an assault on American sovereignty. As a result of all this, while NAFTA may still be able to pass in the Senate, it is in serious trouble in the House.

But the problem with the White House's NAFTA effort goes deeper than just bad strategy. NAFTA is viewed by some powerful forces in the White House as competing with health care for top billing on the fall agenda. So while influential advisors such as David Gergen are arguing for a vigorous NAFTA campaign, others—chief among them George Stephanopoulos and Hillary Clinton—see it as using up scarce political capital.

Gergen does not seem to have won this argument: the President devoted most of his speech before the National Governors' Association to health care, spending only one paragraph on NAFTA. And he has instructed Democratic National Committee Chairman David Wilhelm to set up a full-blown campaign on health care, complete with a “war room”; the DNC has already rented two floors of downtown office space for the “National Health Care Campaign,” which will have some twenty full-time staffers to coordinate grass-roots lobbying activities including town meetings, phone banks, letter-writing campaigns, etc. There will be nothing comparable for NAFTA; a White House official recently told the *Wall Street Journal* that its effort on the treaty “is not going to be like a campaign. It will be more educational.” Without a campaign, NAFTA will reach Congress dead on arrival.

Apparently the White House feels there is little price to be paid for losing NAFTA, perhaps because public opinion on it runs from apathetic to hostile. This is a fundamental miscalculation. Economic and foreign-policy considerations aside, the fate of the Clinton Presidency could hang on the NAFTA battle. If Mr. Clinton wins, he will gain tremendous political leverage which can help him push through the rest of his agenda; a NAFTA defeat will tear away the last shreds of his “New Democrat” ambitions.

Mr. Clinton's success or failure in the fight for NAFTA will answer three important questions.

1. *Are the Democrats capable of leading?* For years, Republicans have charged that the Democratic Party is the party of special interests, beholden to a diverse array of liberal constituencies whose grip renders it incapable of governing. Thus far, Mr. Clinton has tried to appease these groups by delaying NAFTA and negotiating the labor and environmental side agreements. These agreements have now been concluded, presumably to the President's satisfaction. It is time for Mr. Clinton to tell these groups to get on board or get out of the way. If he does so, he can go far toward re-establishing public confidence in the Democratic Party's ability to lead. However, if he allows them to prevent him from winning passage of the NAFTA accord, he will confirm Republican charges that his party is a captive of its special interests.

2. *Is Mr. Clinton a “strong” or a “weak” President?* The perception of strength is crucial to the ability of any President to advance his agenda; in

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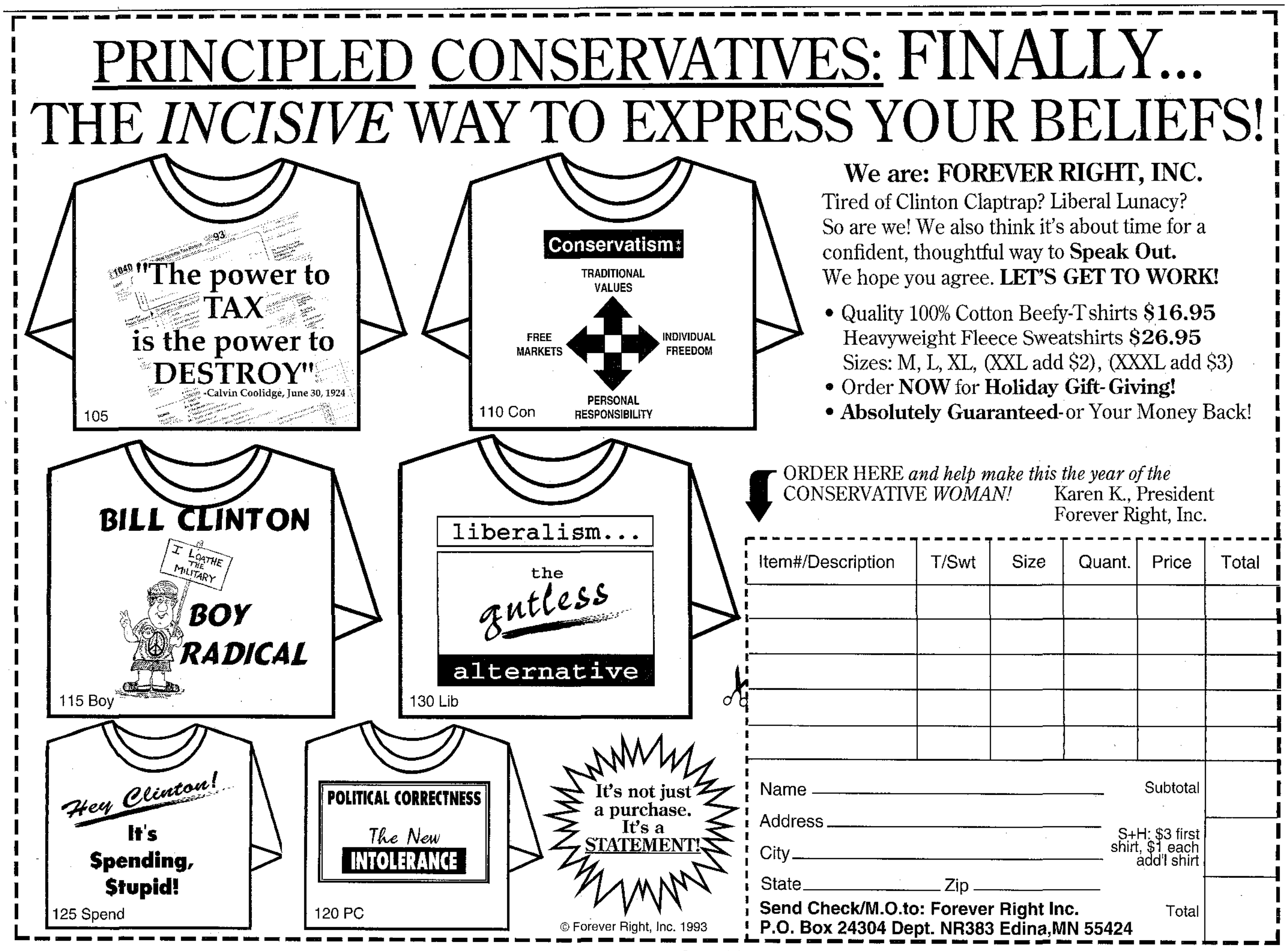

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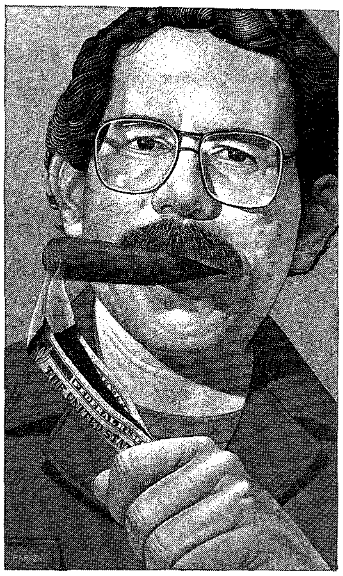

In Nicaragua

SO FAR FROM GOD

The author revisited Nicaragua last month, to find Sandinista hands on too many levers of power, the Contras still brave but abandoned by the U.S., and a political elite that doesn't know what hit it.

ELLIOTT ABRAMS

BY THE TIME I left Managua, half the people I had met were either hostages or hostage negotiators. Their warnings of violence, of political and social decomposition, were becoming reality even sooner than they had predicted to me during quiet meetings. Where I had sat with Nicaragua's vice president, Virgilio Godoy, at the headquarters of the UNO opposition parties, he sat two days later with AK-47 rifles pointed at him by Sandinista thugs. At a farewell dinner party given for me by former Central Bank president Francisco Mayorga (later the key negotiator in efforts to free the hostages), we listened to Sandinista radio stations blame Mayorga for the nation's problems and call for demonstrations. The guests stirred uneasily, wondering if *turbas* (Sandinista mobs) would turn up at his door. We left early. The next morning the Sandinista radio started mentioning my presence, and Nicaraguan friends began to call and say, "Get out of here, fast."

"What a Mess," said the headline in *La Tribuna*, Managua's new independent newspaper. A fair description, but this was not what Nicaraguans, or Americans, expected in 1990 when Nicaragua's civil war drew to a negotiated close. When Violeta Chamorro unexpectedly beat Daniel Ortega in the presidential election, there were rhapsodies of hope: with peace instead of war and democracy in place of tyranny, now the economy could start recovering—with generous foreign aid. It seemed plausible. In June of this year I visited El Salvador, where the same hopes are now being realized. New investment is evident, there is construction everywhere, and old enemies now battle each other with speeches and manifestoes. Why not Nicaragua too?

Begin at the beginning. "I never imagined I was going to be president," Violeta Chamorro told me. She and her chief aide, Antonio Lacayo (also her son-in-law), expected to lose the election and become a sort of loyal opposition. But Nicaragua's masses threw a curveball at the elites: they really wanted the Sandinistas out, and gave Mrs. Chamorro a landslide.

She had the public support needed to take the reins of power from the Sandinista Front (or FSLN from its Spanish initials). She might have fired the Sandinista Army chief, Humberto Ortega, and his secret-police chief, Lenin Cerna. It is hard to believe they had the power to refuse to go. But Mrs. Chamorro and "Tonio" Lacayo blinked. For one thing it was simply much easier to make deals with the familiar FSLN leaders, many of them members of Nicaragua's elite families. As the Nicaraguan historian Arturo Cruz Jr. put it, when Mrs. Chamorro negotiated with the FSLN she was dealing with relatives; to rely on the Contras would have meant working with peasants.

Nowhere Else to Go

BUT Americans must be careful in condemning Mrs. Chamorro's strategy, for we gave her few good choices. The peace negotiations in El Salvador, which seem to have worked, brought two armed groups—the Army and the FMLN guerrillas—to the table to work out reasonable arrangements. America's abandonment of the Nicaraguan Resistance just as negotiations began assured the FSLN's victory at the "peace" table, and its monopoly on power. Moreover, Jimmy Carter and Venezuela's then-President Carlos Andrés Perez (since forced out on corruption charges) strongly urged Mrs. Chamorro to keep Ortega and his men in their uniforms and avoid "confrontations." Appeasement policies always work out the same way, feeding the appetite of the aggressor, weakening the spirit of the appeaser, and ending in disaster. So it has been in Nicaragua.

Mr. Abrams, an NR *contributing editor and senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, was assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs from 1985 to 1989.*

ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERTO PARADA

Today, Nicaragua is a country with neither law nor order. Sandinista behavior since 1990 has been so bad that it finally broke the liberals' back: Ted Kennedy, Chris Dodd, and the entire gang voted this summer to cut aid to Nicaragua as punishment—or, more likely, to protect their rear ends as more information comes in about Sandinista activities. As usual, they voted wrong: the aid cut hurts Nicaragua's poor much more than it hurts the FSLN. But more on that later.

One Who Stood Up Straight

YOU GET a keen insight into life in Nicaragua by talking to Enrique Bolaños. During much of the 1980s Bolaños was the head of COSEP, the key group representing the private sector. He was that rare animal in Nicaragua's in-bred business oligarchy, a highly successful self-made man. Many businessmen made their deals with the Sandinistas to avoid confiscation of their companies. In Nicaragua's political culture, corruption is assumed to be a frequent motivating force. (I watched Nicaragua's national baseball team play one night and saw its best hitter strike out three times. "Well," the TV announcer said, "who's paying him off? There is a dirty hand hidden behind all this.") As in all tyrannies, most people bent with the wind to avoid being broken. Enrique Bolaños stood up straight ("*un hombre recto*," former colleagues call him) and fought the Sandinistas with his voice and his pen.

The Sandinistas punished him by confiscating everything he had. Of course you assume the Chamorro government has given it all back. Not so; the laws that require return of properties or full compensation have simply been ignored. People close to the FSLN or to "Tonio" Lacayo seem to have a much easier time getting properties back. No one I met in Managua called the process fair or lawful. So Enrique Bolaños, now seventy, waits. He has taught himself computer programming and started a new business. He figures his family will get the properties back some day. Maybe too late for me, he said, but the money will help my children. Bolaños remains as tough and upright as ever, not regretting for a moment that he did not bend. But one wonders: our foreign aid is paying for this?

Bolaños described the Sandinistas to me as behaving like "retired pirates," and the words stayed in my mind. What would a retired pirate do? He would protect his loot and make sure he was never punished for past crimes. Which is precisely what the FSLN high command has dedicated itself to since 1990. During the two-month transition period between Violeta Chamorro's election and her inauguration, the Sandinista elites stole everything they could carry off or get title to. Vast *fincas* or estates, beautiful homes, cash, businesses. This is the infamous *piñata*, named after the children's game where you smash a papier-mâché figure and gifts fall out. The Sandinistas smashed the state and looted its holdings; now they fight to keep them, *and* to ensure immunity for past crimes.

In three years Nicaragua has adopted three amnesty laws, the last while I was in Managua. These are essential for the Sandinistas, for they allow *continuing* violence against opponents. Last fall a young businessman named Arges Sequeira became the head of a citizens' committee demanding return of confiscated properties. In November he was murdered. "It was an act of terror," Vice President Godoy told me. Sequeira's killer is known: a Sandinista named Frank Ibarra, once a deputy of Lenin Cerna's in the FSLN Ministry of the Interior. Ibarra has admitted his involvement on TV, but the new amnesty will let him off scot-free unless Mrs. Chamorro vetoes it. Nicaragua's Cardinal, Miguel Obando y Bravo, has repeatedly and publicly urged her to do so; but when I left Managua she had not acted.

Not all Sandinistas stole property during the *piñata*—and that has created the most interesting new division among them, not between reformers and hardliners, but between rich and poor. Those who came from Nicaragua's elite and inherited money, or who have used their brains and talents in business to make

"Absolutely Heavenly"

Nika Hazleton, *NATIONAL REVIEW*, Jan 22, 1990
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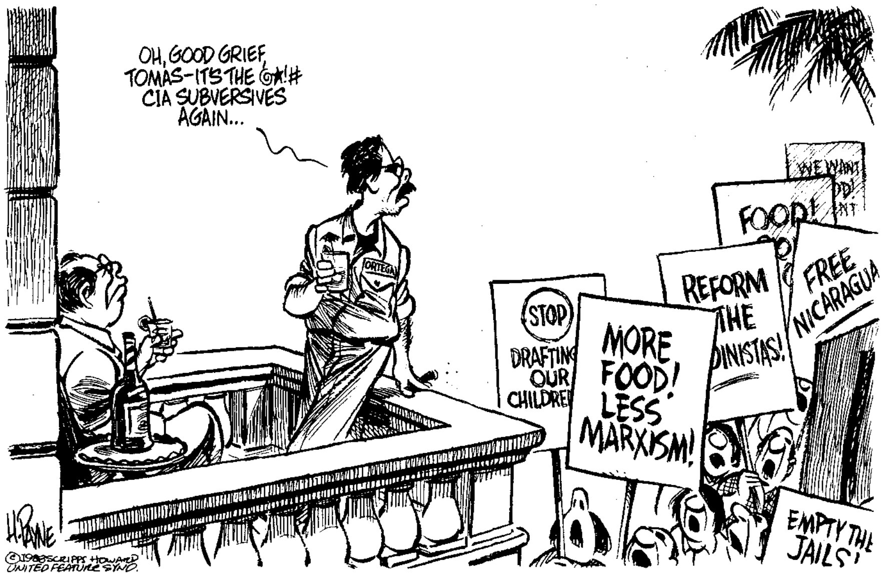
money, or who simply stole money, have a different outlook from those who still struggle for a living. But the elites control the Party: democratic centralism of the Leninist variety holds the FSLN together, and its deputies in the National Assembly have never once failed to vote in a bloc. And the Ortega brothers, who stole the most, control the Army and the police. "He is the richest man in Nicaragua," a businessman told me about someone I was to have dinner with.

"Maybe not any more," another companion cautioned—"by now it may be Humberto."

Maneuvering around the Ortegas

THAT LEAVES Sandinista reformers in a curious position. Some of them are real reformers, real democrats, who have denounced the *piñata* and the acts of violence. I visited Carlos Tunnerman, whom I once declared *persona non grata* as the Sandinista ambassador in Washington, and he was honest about the Party's affairs. Tunnerman would like to see the FSLN become a social democratic party, dropping ties to the security forces and the old Marxist ideology. He is far from alone in the FSLN. But he and his friends do not run things, and his public criticisms have now made him *persona non grata* with his former bosses.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More typical is Sergio Ramírez, vice president during the Sandinista years, a charming, eloquent intellectual who laughed pleasantly when I asked if I could have a taster try the coffee he offered before I drank any myself. Many Sandinistas hope he will be their presidential candidate instead of Daniel Ortega in 1996, when Violeta Chamorro's term ends. In all my conversations with Sandinistas, not one defended Daniel or Humberto Ortega. The fear clearly exists that they wish to establish a family dynasty reminiscent of the Somozas, one brother president and one Army commander. Most Sandinistas realize that Daniel, with his trips to Libya and his Stalinist rhetoric, is damaged goods, a relic of the past who must be passed over—if only Humberto can first be gotten rid of as Army chief.

Well and good, I think to myself, and Ramírez impresses me. But then comes the hostage crisis and there he is, out whipping up the Sandinista crowds. When a group of ex-Contras takes some hostages, he cranks out charges that Nicaragua's conservative parties—old-fashioned and pretty tame—"are the people who ordered this." It is a call for violence; indeed, that night two anti-Sandinista radio stations were wrecked by FSLN mobs.

What do the Sandinistas want? I ask myself. Have they now dumped the old Marxist ideology? Yes, but in its place have emerged pure self-interest and a willingness to use violence to protect their power. The leaders of the ANPDH, the Nicaraguan Human Rights Association, told me that many of the most abusive FSLN officials are still in charge of the areas where they committed their crimes (all carefully documented in ANPDH files). While the Sandinistas' monopoly on force continues, violence will be unchecked. Nicaragua will remain a country without law or order.

It will get worse before it gets better. Humberto Ortega has figured out that pressure for him to go will become overwhelming, unless he can prove—again and again—that he is indispensable. So, the FSLN now produces violent incidents from which Humberto is supposed to emerge as the country's savior. "He wants to be the pacifier of Nicaragua," Managua's mayor, Arnaldo Alemán, a leading opposition politician, told me. In the city of Estelí a show was put on, with Sandinista ex-soldiers apparently taking over the city, only to be driven out by Army men who "saved the day" after bloody battles. But several South American ambassadors said the "mass graves" of the victims are in fact empty, and the ties between the "ex" soldiers and the Sandinista Army were too obvious to fool a child. "Estelí was a bluff that worked badly," said Godoy. Then came a hostage taking by a group of re-armed Contras. The Sandinistas saw an opportunity and their reaction was the hostage taking in Managua, far more serious because it was in the capital and imprisoned much of the opposition leadership. I went to Alfredo César's house for coffee and a chat with this old friend, until last year president of the National Assembly; two days later I watched him, remarkably cool and self-possessed, talk to reporters while hostage takers pointed their guns at him. Humberto's is a dangerous game.

Meanwhile Nicaragua's economy collapses. Cotton production is at 3 per cent of its historic peak, and Antonio Lacayo tells me it will take twenty years for Nicaragua to produce and export as much as it did in 1970. With rapid population growth, per-capita income de-

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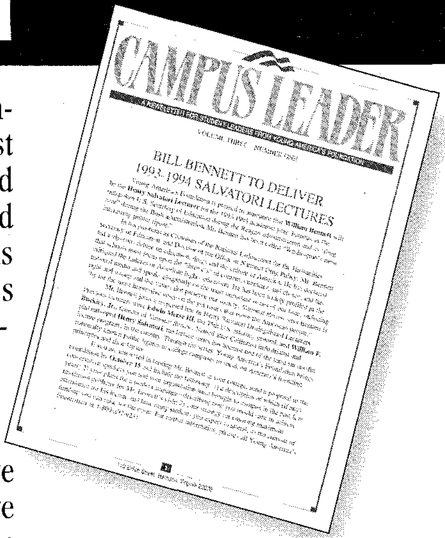

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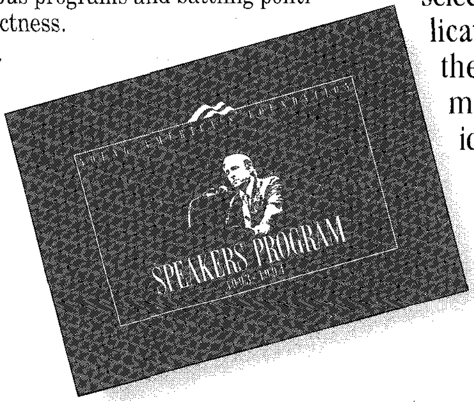

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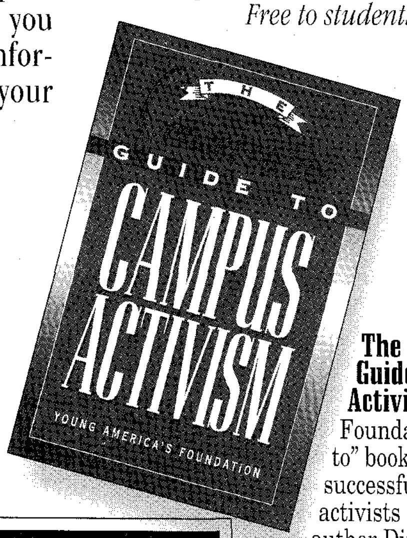

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clines each year. Now, at about a dollar a day, it is sinking to Haitian levels, and there is 60 per cent unemployment. The Cardinal told me that people are once again leaving for the United States. "We in the Church can tell," he says; more people are asking for baptismal certificates to use in lieu of the birth certificates lost in the 1972 earthquake or the war. Nicaragua is surviving on foreign aid, $2 billion of it in the three years of Violeta Chamorro's government, half from the United States. Violeta urged me when I visited her to "remember how I received this country." A fair point. Sandinista policies had ruined the economy, and rebuilding would take time. But three years and $2 billion later, things seem worse than ever.

Not, of course, in parts of Managua. The old elites are back, and consumption in some neighborhoods is pretty conspicuous. The vehicle of choice is the Toyota Land Cruiser ($40,000 when I last checked), used by Sandinista *comandantes* and prosperous businessmen alike. Managua has a new cellular telephone system built in partnership with Motorola, and when I had a luxurious dinner with some businessmen, each had his new little phone on hand. Whenever there was a ring, they all jumped for their phones and confusion ensued. *"¿Allo?" "El tuyo." "¿Allo?" "No, no es el mio, es el suyo."* "Yours." "No, not mine, his." "No, no, yours." And so it went. I had many conversations with businessmen in Managua, and all of them told me about the terrible economic conditions. Yet later I realized not one had ever used the word "poverty." As so often in Latin America, the poor have become invisible to the rich. Private charity of the American sort is almost unknown. But out in the street beggars surround you at every traffic light, and the head of the Jesuit University, Father Xabier Gorostiaga, a liberation-theology man who backed the FSLN in the early years, tells me there are "levels of misery previously unknown in Nicaragua."

Out among the Contras

BUT I WAS unprepared for the misery I saw when I went out to visit the Contras. One hundred miles from Managua, twenty miles beyond the last paved road, is the village of Quimichapa. Here a few hundred Contras were settled under the peace accords that guaranteed them land to till and seeds to start with, and some clothes and possessions to begin a new life. Three years later they wait in wooden hovels with plastic sheeting for roofs, abandoned by their own government and by ours. How many former officials of the Reagan or Bush Administrations have visited them, I ask, in these three years? You are the first, they answer. They have been abandoned—almost.

What saves them from an even worse fate is the Organization of American States. Having formed the opinion in the 1980s that the OAS is better at holding black-tie galas and interminable meetings than actually doing anything, I was amazed. But here, on the outskirts of nowhere, I met OAS officials—South Americans, mostly—who are totally committed to their work. It didn't start that way, they tell me. They signed on because someone had to do the work of disarming and resettling the 10,000 mercenaries who constituted the Contra army. "They were supposed to be the bad guys in this movie," one Argentine OAS man told me. Then the Contras began to gather in the specified locations, and the startled OAS officials found themselves facing an army of *campesinos*—peasants. "They were all peasants," another OAS official recounted. "I was totally unprepared to find this. And then the 10,000 became 12,000. Then 15,000. Then 18,000. In the end we saw this was an army of 22,000 peasants." So much for Sandinista propaganda, and for the "useful idiots" in the U.S. Congress who echoed it. This had been one of the largest peasant uprisings the world has ever seen.

Today the OAS men, working for the CIAV (the Spanish initials for International Commission for Help and Verification), are the Contras' only protectors. They asked me with surprise why we treated the Contras so badly; after all, the budget for the FMLN guerrillas in El Salvador, our former enemies, was twice as large, while they were one-fifth as numerous as the Contras. Yes, one-tenth as much per man and woman for your old allies as for your old enemies; why? It's a long story, I answered; I was too disgusted by what they had told me to discuss it any further.

Seeing the injustice that is being done to these men and women and their families, the OAS officials safeguard them from human-rights violations as best they can, but they tell me that over 150 Contra leaders have been murdered by the Sandinistas. No one has ever been punished for killing a Contra leader. As it does for former soldiers in the Sandinista Army, the OAS builds small medical clinics to care for them, primitive school rooms (no electricity) for their children, and tiny houses for them to live in. Next to Quimichapa the CIAV-OAS is building forty units (or rather the ex-Contras are, with materials the CIAV-OAS provides). Such a "house" is one room about 14 feet square, with a tin roof and cement walls and floor, and openings in the walls for windows. There is, of course, no glass for the windows, no electricity, no running water. Yet these little houses are a gigantic improvement over the way the ex-Contras are now living. Finally, the CIAV-OAS men give the ex-combatants something else, something neither their government nor ours has given them: respect. To see the relationship that has grown up between them changed forever my view of the OAS.

My meetings with ex-Contras did not end in Quimichapa. I had dinner with a group of ex-*comandantes* one night in Managua. It is difficult to describe their *esprit de corps*, their mutual respect, and their belief they had made the only possible decision when they chose to fight; but it reminded me of accounts of Confederate veterans after our Civil War. These ex-*comandantes*, too, feel abandoned by their own government and by ours—a verdict I could not in good conscience contradict. But they have decided to organize—as one put it, "to continue the struggle in the civil arena." They are starting the Nicaraguan Resistance Party; in a few short months it has attracted 100,000 members. "The old political parties failed to deal with Somoza and they failed to deal with the FSLN, and they are failing again now," one ex-*comandante* told me. This new party is the first in Nicaraguan history—including the Sandinistas—to be run by *mestizos* (people of mixed blood) rather than whites, and the first to call for the absolute abolition of the Nicaraguan Army, on the model of Costa Rica. Also, it plans to choose candidates by primaries, another first for the nation.

What the Sandinistas Fear

DO THEY have a chance? Clearly the Sandinistas think so. They murdered the Contras' former commander, Enrique Bermúdez, as soon as he set foot in the country. When I arrived at the Managua Intercontinental Hotel my driver immediately showed me the spot, right in the hotel's parking lot. I passed it fifty times during my stay, and each time wondered why the FSLN had to kill a man often reviled as an incompetent by Americans. The answer is that the Contra army was not hierarchic; each band followed its own *comandante*, and they knew only one unifying figure: Bermúdez. He had the ability to unify the Contras, and the Contras remain the only group the Sandinistas really worry about. Not militarily, for they are mostly disarmed; but this Resistance Party is exactly what the FSLN fears.

For Nicaragua's old parties are in fact greatly *desprestigiado*, that untranslatable Spanish word meaning "de-prestiged." Time and again, they have failed. And so has the FSLN. The Sandinista Army was a conscript one, but it too consisted of peasants, and they are as disillusioned as the ex-Contras with the misery they now face. The tension in the countryside is immense, but it is between peasants and the people who run things, including the FSLN officials who run things out where Doña Violeta's writ is non-existent. Among peasants who have been soldiers in the Sandinista Army and those who were Contras, little tension exists. Both groups clearly see, when they meet, their own mirror image, and their own daily struggles for bread. When the better educated among these former enemies meet, in courses at Gorostiaga's University of Central America or at INCAE, the Central American institute whose Managua campus is half graduate school and half think tank, they get along fine; in fact, often they become close very fast. Thus the Resistance Party's organizers see the ex-soldiers, as well as the ex-Contras, as their potential base. When I asked Father Gorostiaga who would be the next president of Nicaragua, he said, "Someone new, someone who has not been identified yet, someone who is not from the power structure and the big parties."

Meanwhile the former Contras tell me they are fighting to save Nicaragua, now with ballots and speeches, just as they fought in the 1980s with guns the U.S. supplied. They add: "We refuse to accept the labels the Sandinistas put on us. We are fighting to redeem those battles of the 1980s, too, and we want our place in this country's history." I wondered, as we sat there, how well they would do at politics. And which of them the Sandinistas would kill first.

When we parted, all shaking hands, one of them, Emanuel, said to me, "I really want to thank you for the sacrifices you've made on our behalf." I was speechless at this, for Emanuel's arms had been blown off in an explosion during the war. He wears prosthetic arms, yet he thanked me for my sacrifices. What do you say to this? But he gave me no chance to respond; rather, he said, "Hey, don't shake hands with me, because I won't feel it." Instead we embraced. Those who spent the 1980s reviling these men have much to answer for, and curiously the first to realize this are the Sandinistas, who privately acknowledge that their own mistreatment of Nicaragua's small farmers produced the Contra rebellion. Today the Contras' spirit contributes one of the few pure elements in Nicaraguan politics, uncorrupted by past compromises or crimes. They face off

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against the Sandinistas, still unafraid, still, in fact, the Resistance.

Minority of Two

FATHER GOROSTIAGA asked me, "If the poverty and injustice of the 1970s produced civil war, how can the worse misery we now have produce democracy, stability, and peace?" Doña Violeta's government, he said, has failed, an opinion shared by everyone I met in Nicaragua except Mrs. Chamorro herself and Antonio Lacayo. Public-opinion polls show her popularity declining steadily. Her government floats in thin air, with no substantial political support.

Now what? When I left Managua two hostage incidents were underway and two radio stations had been sacked. At such a juncture, Nicaraguans turn almost instinctively to Washington. Though they have spent a century complaining about American intervention, Nicaraguans have also acquired the habit of looking north. What is more, one can now detect the fear of being abandoned, a fear shared by Right, Center, and Left—even by the Sandinistas. "We are children of the Cold War," a businessman said to me, meaning that Washington's relations with Somoza and the Contra program in the 1980s were Cold War phenomena. "Not exactly," replied my friend Arturo Cruz Jr. "We are orphans of the Cold War."

Just so. During the Cold War Nicaragua was a prize, worth immense amounts of attention and spending by Moscow and Washington. Despite the country's small size and limited resources, it joined the odd collection of places—Grenada and Angola come to mind—to which the Cold War gave 15 minutes of fame on the geopolitical stage. Central America was a battlefield between the Soviets and the United States, and, sometimes nearly as bloodily, between liberals and conservatives in Washington. As a farewell gift for playing this role, the United States has given Mrs. Chamorro's government $1 billion and helped raise more. But Nicaraguans, aware that their brief strut upon the stage has ended, now worry less about American intervention than about American indifference.

This became apparent to me in an astonishing conversation with Comandante Victor Tirado, who handles international affairs for the Sandinistas. A smart and articulate man, he made his argument for Nicaragua's importance to us well. First of all, he said, we could become a way station for drugs coming up from South America. There could, you know, be real economic collapse here, violence and disorder. And since we're right in the middle of Central America it would all spread to Costa Rica and Honduras and El Salvador. Even, he added, to southern Mexico. There would be hundreds of thousands of refugees. The United States has very real interests here, and you can't deny them.

Where had I heard this before? I asked myself. From Ronald Reagan! All that's missing, I felt like telling Tirado, is the reference Reagan used to make in his speeches to Harlingen, Texas, being closer to Managua than to Washington. It was the old stock speech on Nicaragua we had all made, now coming back at me from a Sandinista *comandante*!

Nor was that all Tirado had to say. "Count on the Sandinista Party," he told me, to be a good partner for the U.S. in combatting drugs and terrorism. (I told him this pledge might be more persuasive if Daniel Ortega could stop visiting Libya, a comment he and his colleagues acknowledged with a laugh that showed little respect for their former president.) This helped explain why so many Sandinistas were glad to meet me. They wanted to send a message to Washington, and who better to carry it than their old enemy? The message: Let bygones be bygones. This is a new era, and a new Sandinista Party.

This desire to be accepted in Washington has come hard to the Sandinistas. When the air war in the Persian Gulf turned into an immediate American victory, Humberto Ortega told intimates it meant nothing: when war on the ground began, the Americans would be crushed. The next few days taught Humberto what all Sandinistas now realize: there's only one game in town for Nicaragua and it's played in Washington.

What exactly do the Sandinistas want? Why, they want it all. They want to have polite chats over good coffee, and talk of joint anti-drug programs; they want the invitations to Washington that their erstwhile protégés, the FMLN in El Salvador, began to receive as soon as they put down their arms. But they also want to keep their arms, and to keep on using them. They want to maintain control over the Army and the police, to murder their enemies and take hostages, to blow up radio stations and avoid trials, to keep the property they stole in the *piñata*. They want it all. And in fact there's only one thing stopping them from having it all: the cursed Americans, who have just once again suspended aid to Nicaragua. This time it came as the Senate's reaction, in a July 28 vote, to the discovery of huge secret arms caches in Managua and of a Nicaraguan connection to the World Trade Center bombing, namely the continuing availability of Nicaraguan passports to terrorists.

American aid is two things in Nicaragua, Antonio Lacayo told me. It provides genuine help to the economy, but it also constitutes a legitimation of the government. Our own government's troubles started, he said, when you suspended aid during the Bush Administration: both Left and Right stopped cooperating with us, positions hardened, things became polarized. Your aid is a blessing of the government; the withdrawal of the aid is the withdrawal of the blessing, and it weakens Doña Violeta.

This is no doubt true, but raises the final question: What do *we* want in Nicaragua? What is our aid *for*?

Suspending American aid entirely is a senseless act that should be reversed quickly. This cuts off funding for the OAS's activities, which are quite simply the best thing now going on in Nicaragua. Republicans who wish to help the Contras should double, not suspend, the amount we are giving to the OAS for this program.

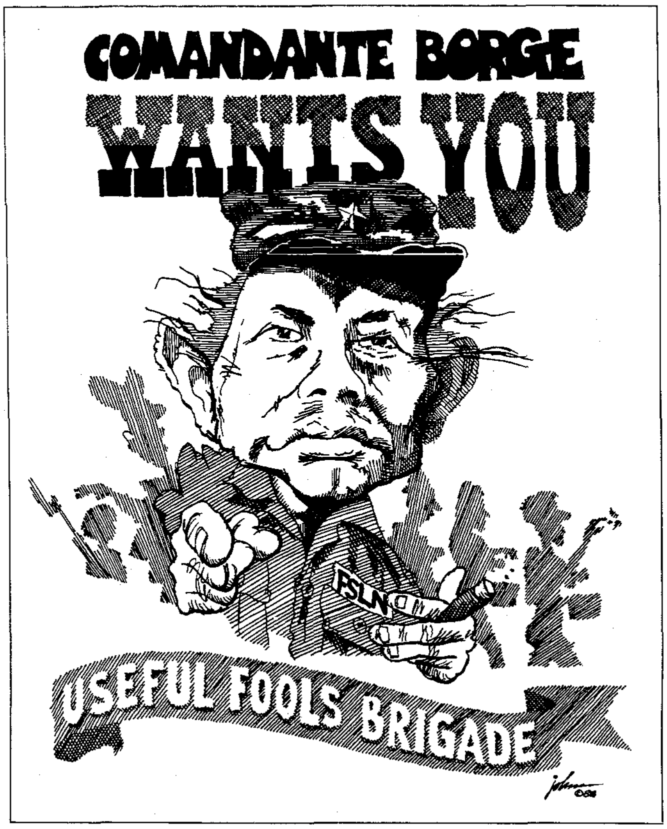
Democrats who believe in multilateralism and in strengthening the OAS should join them. And the OAS does its work with a small budget—CIAV-OAS is seeking only $4 million for next year—and with the amazingly low overhead expense of just under 10 per cent, a bureaucratic miracle. Many U.S. AID programs do almost as much good, from supporting human-rights groups in Nicaragua through the National Endowment for Democracy, to undertaking the only constructive work on the Atlantic Coast. There, the Indians, once again forgotten by Managua, are being helped by AID to rebuild roads and bridges damaged during the war, thereby providing work for 2,300 Indians in a region of immense poverty. When the aid goes to the central government, however, especially when it goes in cash, much is lost to inefficiency or is skimmed off by Sandinista-controlled institutions. So our policy should be to bypass the Nicaraguan government whenever possible, use our cash transfers to the government when we want to send it a message, and maintain funding of effective aid programs that directly help Nicaraguans in need. Suspending our aid programs now punishes only the intended recipients, not the Sandinistas.

Should we be sending a message now, suspending our cash transfers on political grounds? Nicaraguans are divided on this. Some, like Gorostiaga, want to end American intervention, seeing it as polarizing. Many Nicaraguans, even conservative businessmen I spoke to, react with nationalist resentment at continued American interference. "I want Humberto Ortega out as Army chief, but not because you say so," one told me. But this is not the time to abandon Nicaragua to the Sandinistas, as we did in 1979 and then again in rushing to disarm the Contras in 1989 and 1990. In fact the only force strong enough to counterbalance the weight of their guns remains Washington. "We couldn't get rid of Somoza without you," one Nicaraguan friend told me, "and we'll never get rid of Humberto Ortega without you." Sadly, he is right. To disengage now would be to abandon that nation to the old Latin curse: the perpetual grip of the men in uniforms.

Nicaragua today is, as *La Tribuna*'s headline claimed, a mess. In effect it lacks a government at a moment when strong leadership is needed. ("Violeta has the same duties as Queen Elizabeth," Vice President Godoy put it sharply.) In the countryside misery grows, enveloping *campesinos* who served on both sides in the war. "If they take up arms again," I was warned, "it won't be against each other. They'll go after all those people riding around in Land Cruisers." If there is hope, of course, it lies ultimately within Nicaragua and not in aid programs or foreign pressure. There will be ex-Sandinistas turned democrats, ex-Contras turned organizers, businessmen who see their country's peril, the indomitable Cardinal Obando, all contributing to an effort to hold truly free elections in 1996 and to choose new and effective leaders. But while Nicaragua staggers on, let us at least be clear about whose side we are on. It must be the side of democracy and civilian rule. Throwing more money at the Nicaraguan government right now is indeed, as "Tonio" Lacayo said, blessing it, and we should not be blessing a government that still, three years after purportedly taking over, allows the Sandinistas full control of the Army and police. We should condition our aid on real progress in getting the Sandinistas out of both institutions.

Soldiering On

STAGGER ON Nicaragua will. In the best of circumstances it would take twenty years to recover the prosperity the nation had in the 1960s and 1970s, when it exported coffee and cotton and was famous for its cattle. Nicaraguans used to cross the border into Honduras and shake their heads at the thin cattle there. Today, the Honduran economy is growing, their beef cattle are fat, and Hondurans crossing the border shake their heads at the calamity that Nicaragua is experiencing. Managua's center remains the ruin it became in the 1972 earthquake. But near the center is the new cathedral, just now completed. The modern architecture requires a very catholic taste, but it is the last cathedral that will be built in this millennium, an instant landmark in Managua, a reminder to Nicaraguans that there is a future, and that the Church at least will accompany them through this crisis. So should we, in our much more limited way, using the tools of aid and trade and political blessings. We would prefer to be rid of this burden now, while they would prefer to achieve a political independence that has hitherto been unavailable. But both sides ought to soldier on a few years yet, until stability and peace return to Nicaragua. It is not the least we can do, but it is the least we can honorably do. □



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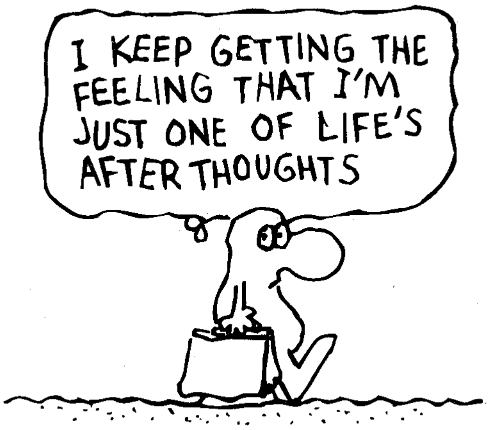
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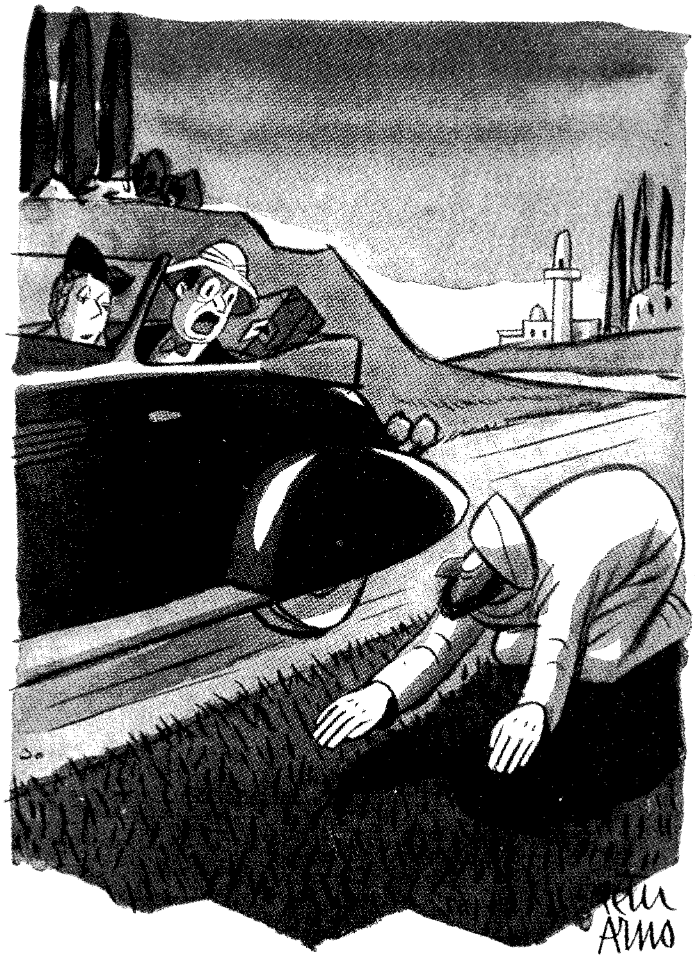

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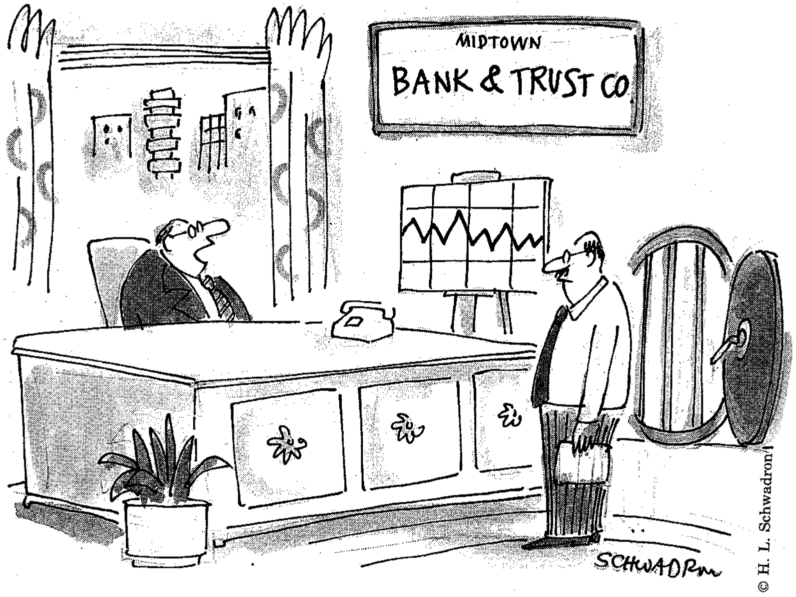
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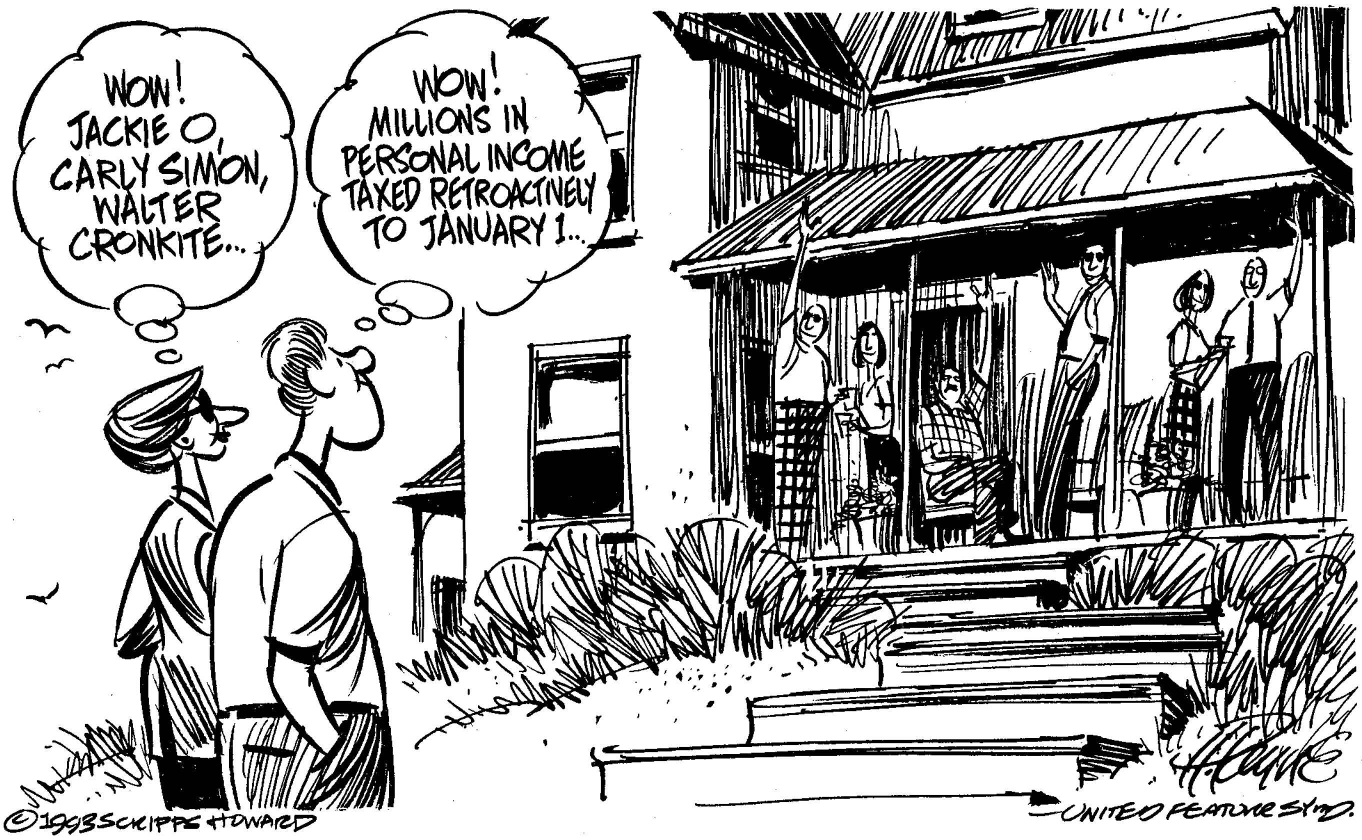
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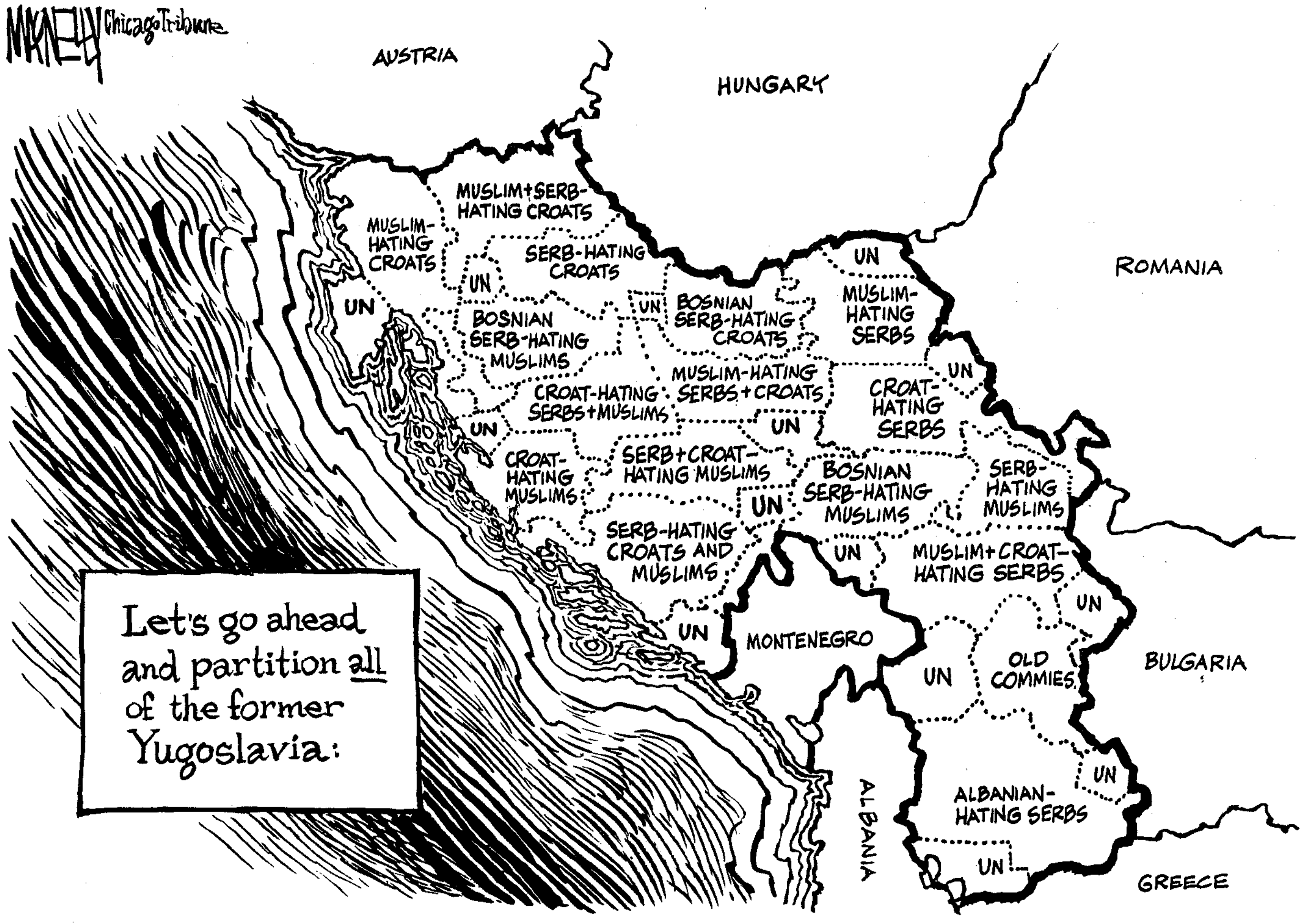
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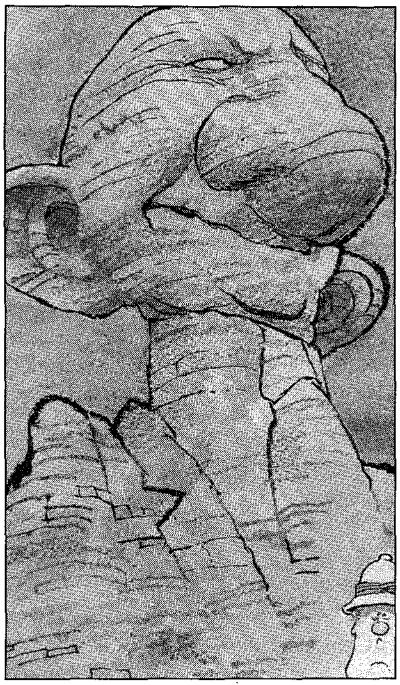

Watching Ross Perot

DOES THE SPHINX HAVE A RIDDLE?

Politicians across the spectrum are mesmerized by Ross Perot. What will he do in '94? Will he run in '96? He may be distracting them from questions closer to home.

WICK ALLISON

REPUBLICAN pollster Frank Luntz has a dream.

It is the week before the 1994 midterm elections. President Clinton's numbers are in the tank. America's economic engine is still sputtering from the 1993 tax increases. Ross Perot, charts in hand, goes on all three networks simultaneously to denounce Congress as cowardly, corrupt, and out of touch. Citing instance after instance of special-interest favors, cronyism, and pork-barrel spending, he urges voters to cast their ballots against the incumbents, no matter who they are or what party they belong to.

Luntz enjoys this fantasy enough to have run the numbers. If one in ten voters heeds Perot's call, over sixty representatives and ten senators lose their seats. Combine this with already-marginal districts and states where senatorial contests are a toss-up, and America wakes up the day after the election to a Republican Senate and a Republican-dominated, if not -controlled, House. Hillary calls off her plans for redecorating the West Wing.

Be careful what you pray for, an old adage runs, because you just might get it. In this scenario, what the country would get is Ross Perot as its most powerful political figure. If you think he's scary now, wait until he holds all the cards on Capitol Hill.

Considering his fickleness and often astonishing naïveté, would Perot be capable of such a calculated ploy? Put the question another way, and the answer is self-evident. Is there anyone who thinks that Ross Perot wouldn't *enjoy* being the most powerful political figure in the country—without the tawdry inconvenience of having to run for elective office again?

If there's any doubt about it, recall Perot's grandstanding over Kay Bailey Hutchison's victory in the special senatorial election in Texas. In that case, he had three problems. One, an outright endorsement would have endangered the non-profit status of his United We Stand America. Two, ardent Perotista Richard Fisher was also in the race. Fisher spent several millions of his own money to capture the supposed Perot bloc in the free-for-all general election. But, embarrassingly, Perot's coattails in his home state turned out to be largely non-existent; Fisher captured just 8 per cent of the vote. Three, once Mrs. Hutchison came out on top in the general, she was such a clear favorite to win the run-off that Perot's support was moot. Realizing that his clout could be called into question, Perot waited until the week before the run-off, when Mrs. Hutchison was building on her twenty-point lead in the polls, then announced with a flourish a survey of his members that showed 90 per cent were voting for her. It wasn't an endorsement, Perot was careful to point out, but he trumpeted it as if it were. And when Kay Hutchison won by a nearly two-thirds margin, Perot was quick to claim the credit—not in Texas, where nobody would have believed him, but in Washington, where incumbents are quick to hear the hoofbeats of the approaching Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

Perot likes to take credit. He takes credit for George Bush's no longer enjoying the occupancy of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. (Exit polls show Clinton would have won without Perot's re-entry into the race.) He takes credit for Congress's seemingly new-found devotion to deficit reduction. (The tax increases of 1982, 1984, and 1990 were all passed in the name of deficit reduction.) But on a policy level as well as a political one, he deserves some credit. The solidity of the Republican opposition to Clinton's budget and the defection of so many Democrats is no doubt due, in some part, to Perot's conversion experience on spending cuts. (His own budget in the campaign called for higher taxes than Clinton's. He now impatiently waves that off, without, as usual, any explanation.) Perot continues to carp on the imperial trappings of the Cold War Presidency and the cozy financial relation-

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Mr. Allison is an NR *contributing editor.*

ships of the political elite, much to Washington's discomfort—and anything that worries Washington has got to be good for the country. He also continues to call for the line-item veto, a balanced-budget amendment, and term limits (another switch from his campaign platform).

Unfortunately, he also is mounting a full-fledged attack on NAFTA. His newest book—*Save Your Job, Save Our Country: Why NAFTA Must Be Stopped*, which just hit the bookstores—is unlikely to blitz the best-seller lists, but it may be enough to capsize the treaty. If senior Democratic House members such as Dick Gephardt and David Bonior are able to postpone action on the treaty, Perot will have even more to crow about; you can bet he won't be shy about it.

How Potent Is Perot?

REPUBLICAN responses to Perot's looming presence range from Bill Bennett's "Ignore him," to Newt Gingrich's "Embrace him," but the most typical is probably Bob Dole's "Humor him." One of the benefits of being the opposition party is that different spokesmen can employ different strategies in dealing with the phenomenon Perot represents. One day Gingrich can praise him for calling for more spending cuts, and the next day Kemp can attack him for his opposition to free trade. And Dole can pick up the telephone to say, No hard feelings.

The Clinton White House faces a more serious challenge. A superficial reading of the electoral numbers and recent poll results show that Clinton's best bet might be to get on his knees and beg Ross Perot to run in 1996 as a way of splitting the opposition vote. The fact of the matter is that the political dynamics of a Perot candidacy in 1996 would be much the same as in his original entry in 1992: it would diminish the incumbent and focus voters on everything wrong with the sitting Administration, paving the way for the more electable candidate of the opposition party.

Four factors will determine Perot's potency, either as an unelected spokesman for "the owners of the country" or as a candidate in 1996.

1. *His voters.* Stan Greenberg's poll for the Democratic Leadership Council shows 75 per cent of Perot's supporters

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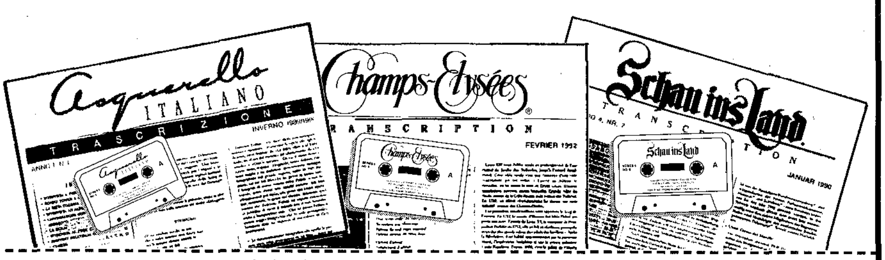

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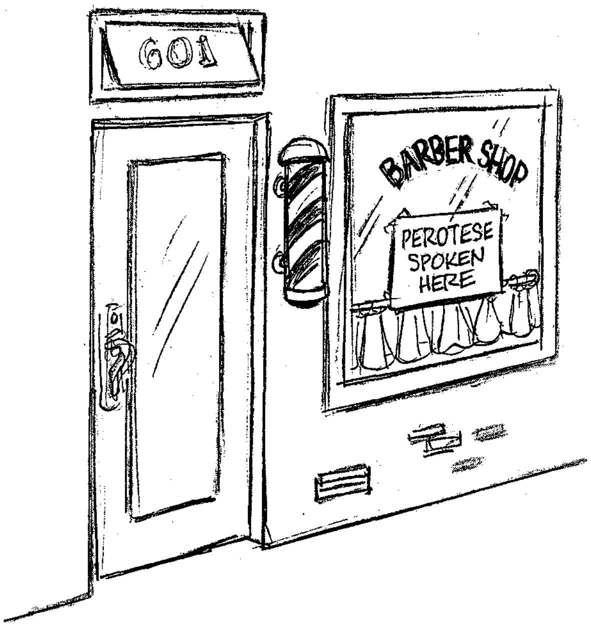
are hanging with him. That would be a formidable bloc if it were a bloc, but it's not. At his peak in June 1992, Perot's supporters were divided equally between liberals and conservatives. And they varied from state to state: in New York, moderate liberals; in Arizona, conservative retirees; in California, aging yuppies.

This group has been winnowed out a bit, with liberals returning mostly to the Democratic Party and many Perot Republicans being disillusioned by his calls for higher taxes ("shared sacrifice") and his opposition to NAFTA. Demographic studies show his supporters today to be mostly male, 25-to-40-year-old, middle-income, ideologically moderate conservatives living west of the Mississippi, who generally trend Republican in national races and are mixed in more local contests. They are the struggling middle class, and unless the boom times suddenly reappear they are likely to be struggling a little bit harder with each year that passes. As Perot continues to wander from television studio to television studio, blasting away with little to offer in exchange—his disastrous appearance on *Meet the Press* in July is an example—these voters are likely to start falling away. They are negative toward Washington, sure, but they are searching for a positive program to support. Once they thought Perot exemplified it, but this continuing inability to come up with much more than a series of gripes does not play well in Peoria. Perot has rallied his supporters around the flagpole, but found himself incapable of running up a flag. His grabbag of complaints and rapidly emptying storehouse of soundbites are not a program, and even less a philosophy, capable of holding together and inspiring a movement. Even so, estimates of his core support range from 20 to 30 per cent of his original vote, and that's still five to six million voters. Despite his problems, there's no doubt that if he wants to be, Ross Perot is a player.

2. *His personality*. Perot has bitten deeply into the apple of public adoration, and he likes the taste. It's not enough to explain him as a simple case of egomania: Perot has felt the juice in his veins, and, like any addict, he'll do whatever is necessary to keep the drug flowing. Perot's lack of deep reflection on the nature of government, and his consequent inability to do more than repeat his litany, make him at times appear ill informed, defensive, and negative, especially when pinned down by the media (in a recent appearance he even got testy with C-SPAN's mild-mannered Brian Lamb when Lamb asked an unobsequious question). After more than a year on the campaign trail, Perot still hasn't done his homework, and it shows. "In a battle of wits," one Democrat, a former Perot supporter, told me, "Ross Perot is basically unarmed."



Yet, thin-skinned as he may appear, he's thick-skinned enough to shrug off what for any normal public figure would be debilitating embarrassments. It's the craving for the juice that may be his undoing. Overexposure—and the wrong kind of exposure—has sunk many a Hollywood and Washington career. If Perot were calculating enough to bide his time, harness his strengths, and choose his battles with an eye to easy wins, he might be able to maintain enough momentum to hold his followers. But that's not Ross Perot. The most common refrain among staffers in his first campaign—when even the campaign manager didn't know where he could be found from day to day—was "That's just the way he is." "The most disappointing thing about him," says a mutual friend in Dallas, "is that what you see is what you get."

Personality matters in Perot's case, not only because he's a one-man band but also because politics to him *is* personal. He ran in 1992 partly for the pure pleasure of sinking George Bush. While he seemed willing to give the newly elected Bill Clinton a chance, he quickly changed his mind when the phone calls started coming in from the Pentagon. Now he sums up the Clinton Presidency with an anecdote about a uniformed military officer who was about to make a presentation in the Oval Office in the first weeks of the new Administration. While the officer was waiting to enter, a young aide bustled up to him and said, "Keep it short. We don't like uniforms in the White House." Even though Clinton had adopted almost 80 per cent of Perot's vaunted economic plan, and despite the careful coddling by the Clinton people after the election, that one story seems to be all it took.

So once again Perot has entered the ring, but for the time being he has only one opponent to slug against. In response Clinton can only shadow-box, feinting and moving because Perot's positions are so, how does one put this—amenable to change. The result is less a debate over America's future than an elaborate exercise in ducking and dancing.

3. *His money*. He has more of it every minute. And despite reports about tight-fistedness, he doesn't mind spending it when he sees a clear goal. At the moment he's spending on United We Stand America. His goal is to announce three million members by the first of the year, roughly the size of the National Rifle Association, which would be quite a feat to accomplish in barely 18 months. But the people who join the organization are less important than the people Perot reaches with appeals to join it. A thirty-minute broadcast in March, for example, was watched by twenty million viewers, according to a study done for Perot by an independent survey company. For the most part, anyone who will watch a half-hour program on government in a non-election year can be qualified as involved. No matter how disaffected such people may

be, Perot's efforts keep them engaged and even motivated. Like the radio talk shows which have sprung up across the fruited plain, this cannot be good news for a governing class accustomed to a somnolent electorate.

4. *His strategy.* Ross Perot does not have a strategy for becoming President of the United States for the simple reason that he doesn't want to become President. He believes in a few simple nostrums, and he wants to see them implemented. No party platform will ever be written that would suit him, because no party platform could contain so many contrary points.

But that doesn't mean he might not try. He could well decide that the best course for influencing events in 1996 would be to enter the Republican primaries and show up at the Convention with enough delegates to make him a principal writer of the party's platform and a possibly determining factor in the selection of the nominee. While it is hard to imagine him slogging through day after day of mall appearances and night after night of rubber chicken, Republican officials have played into his hands by moving up the date of the California primary, the one state—besides Iowa with its caucuses—where he could rack up impressive numbers. If he made it through the process without quitting in a huff or bolting (in a huff) to a third-party candidacy, his remaining supporters might follow him in supporting the Republican ticket. And while raw numbers may suggest that would be enough to pull Republicans into an even race, the price that Perot would demand could cost them the prize.

Aside from his Washington-bashing, which elements of a Perot platform would Republicans be willing to accept? "Fair" trade, as opposed to free trade? Government–industry partnerships? Elimination of deficits given a higher priority than economic growth? A fifty-cent gasoline tax? Economic war against our trading partners? It's all well and good to look under the hood, but the evidence suggests Perot doesn't have the slightest idea of what makes the engine run.

A Question for the GOP

REPUBLICANS who think Perot's voters—or what will remain of them by 1996—hold the key to victory had better think again. It's too important not to repeat: Clinton would have beaten Bush *without* Perot's re-entry into the race. And for a very good reason.

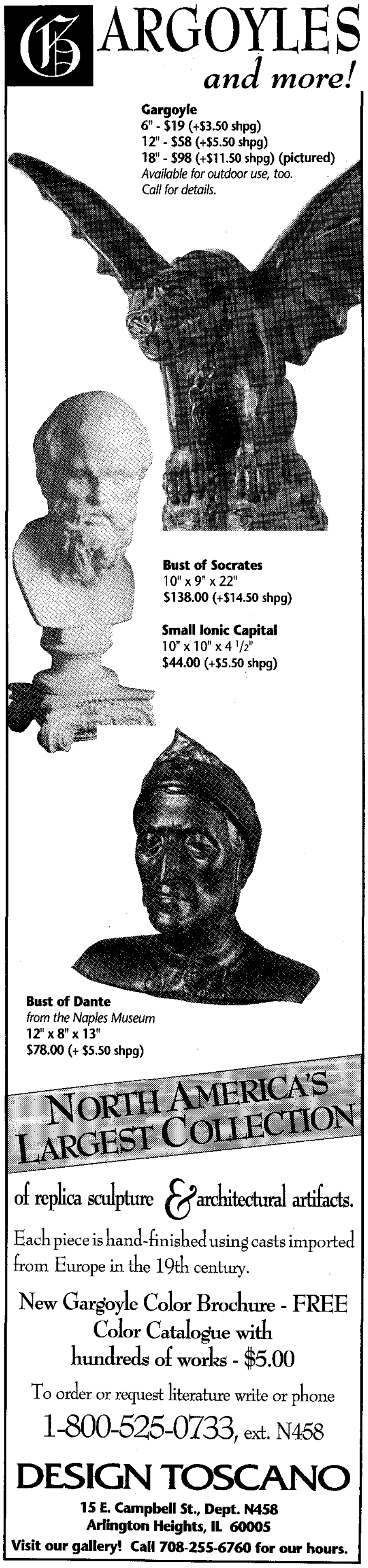
Exit polls from 1992 reveal the disaster inflicted by the Bush Administration—with its lack of passion, its arrogance, and its economic ignorance—on the Reagan coalition. Bush could muster the support of only 23 per cent of the Democrats who had voted for the ticket that he ran on in 1984.

There lies the real lesson of 1992. And Perot had nothing to do with it. Some 56 per cent of Democrats who voted for Reagan in 1984 jumped ship—or returned home—in 1992 to vote for Bill Clinton. States like Illinois (Republican since 1968), Michigan (Republican since 1972), Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New Jersey are the heartland of Reagan Democrat country, and they all gave their considerable electoral votes to the promise of a New Democrat.

These Northern industrial voters are not Perot supporters. Perot's scattered Western support (he's not all that popular in the South either) may have a cultural underpinning—the myth of the lone sheriff willing to take on the bad guys and run them out of town—and it may even be enough to take him through another cycle. But it doesn't seem to hold many electoral votes, and it doesn't even seem, when one examines the state-by-state totals, to influence that many.

Meanwhile, a key segment of the electorate is being overlooked. Unlike Perot's supporters, Reagan Democrats *are* a bloc. They hold the same values, worry about the same things, live mostly in the same kind of neighborhoods, are moved by the same symbols, and vote the same way. While Ross Perot continues to display his idiosyncrasies to the world, they quietly go about the difficult job of holding their lives together and raising their children in an America that is far different from the country they were born in. More to the point politically, because they are a bloc, they determine how crucial electoral votes are cast.

The question facing Republicans today is not whether Ross Perot was a one-time phenomenon. The question that Republicans need to ask openly and urgently is: Was Ronald Reagan? □



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Endangered Ecosystems

BABBITT'S ECOBABBLE

The good news? Bruce Babbitt wants to stop listing species. The bad news? The reason.

IKE C. SUGG

BRUCE BABBITT says he was born to be Secretary of the Interior, a destiny that was finally fulfilled this January. Considered by many to be the brightest star in Bill Clinton's Cabinet, Secretary Babbitt is staking his political life on something called "ecosystem management." He views this concept as a way to escape the absolutism of the Endangered Species Act, which has become a regulatory straitjacket for property owners and politicians alike.

Under the ESA, species thought to be in danger of becoming extinct are "listed." Once a species is listed, any human use of land inhabited by that species can be prohibited—"whatever the cost," according to the Supreme Court.

From this, it is easy to see why landowners would favor drastic reform, if not outright repeal, of the Endangered Species Act. But to understand why politicians need protection from the ESA, one must appreciate the predicament in which Babbitt finds himself.

Secretary Babbitt is bound by an out-of-court settlement made by the Bush Administration with the Fund for Animals. Under that agreement, the Interior Department must add some four hundred candidate species to the ESA list by September 1996, and expedite consideration for another nine hundred species. Given existing funding levels and the molasses-like speed of Interior's bureaucracy, this would be impossible to do on a species-by-species basis (on average, Interior has been adding about fifty species per year). Even if Babbitt were able to double the annual rate of listing, he would fall far short of the court-ordered mark.

Thus, it is no wonder that Babbitt has proposed to do away with "focusing on single species," opting instead for the "multispecies" ecosystem approach. This will allow "more flexibility" in administering and enforcing the ESA. Rather than going through the laborious process of scientifically documenting the need to list each and every species, Babbitt could simply protect ecosystems that have several hundred species in them.

Essentially, Babbitt wants to avoid having to list species. This is precisely what environmental groups accused Republican Administrations of doing in the past. However, while Republicans may have avoided listings so as to avoid regulating land use, Babbitt is proposing to regulate land use so as to avoid listing species. Cast in Beltway parlance as "proactive," this is what Secretary Babbitt means when he intones that we must "intervene before the crisis." Doing so, he says, will "enhance the position of private property owners."

The Gnatcatcher Scenario

FOR A GOOD illustration of how their position is likely to be enhanced, we might take a look at Southern California's Natural Communities Conservation Plan, which Secretary Babbitt has called a "model" of ecosystem management. Under the plan, developers "voluntarily" idled 200,000 acres of some of the highest-priced real estate in the country, where undeveloped beachfront lots go for as much as $800,000 per acre. Their hope was that such good-faith sacrifice would pre-empt the listing of the California gnatcatcher, a small songbird inhabiting as much as 400,000 acres of the same coastal sage scrub land coveted by developers. Babbitt described the experiment as "breathtaking . . . it's the first time it's ever been done."

If property owners have anything to say, it may well be the last. The gnatcatcher was listed anyway—transforming voluntary efforts into mandatory requirements. Still, Babbitt maintains "it's going to work." According to a recent puff-piece in *The New York Times Magazine*, Babbitt "brokered a settlement giving protection to the gnatcatcher . . . while still giving the go-ahead to housing developments that had threatened the bird." If this sounds too good to be true, it is. In June, California's Scientific Review Panel released its report, which found that 95 per cent of the coastal sage scrub "ecosystem" would be off limits to development.

It makes little difference to a landowner whether the use of his land is lost through a listing or through "ecosystem management." If ecosystem management will mean regulating private property without waiting for an environmental group to sue Interior for balking on a listing, then it will simply shift the formal cause of regulation from species to ecosystem. Indeed, if the ESA remains unchanged, ecosystem management will prevent neither law suits nor listings. The determining factor will be whether litigious environmental groups believe the existing regulations are adequate; if not, they will use the ESA and sue anyway. If, on the other hand, the regulations are sufficiently stringent to accomplish what the environmentalists would otherwise seek under the ESA, then landowners will be no better off.

In Congress's Hands

THE FIRST political hurdle for ecosystem management is passing the $180-million National Biological Survey (NBS) when Congress reconvenes this month. The NBS would be a new Interior Department agency, charged with gathering biological data on public and private lands nationwide.

An important wrinkle is that under the NBS the Freedom of Information Act will be waived. This means that

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Mr. Sugg is the Walker Fellow in Environmental Studies at the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

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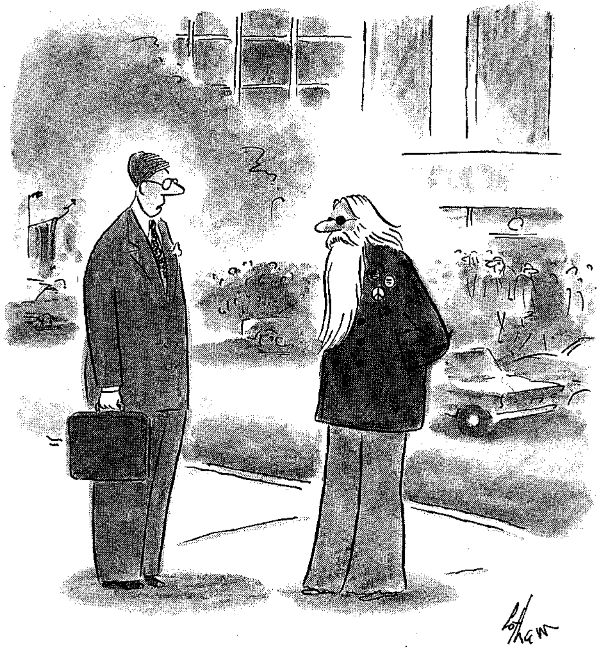
property owners will not have access to the biological information gathered from their own property. They won't be able to challenge the regulation of their land on scientific grounds, as they can now under the ESA. This is akin to saying, "Trust me—your land is part of a very fragile ecosystem, and we don't have to prove it."

This is of more political import than one might think. The fact is that the majority of candidates for ESA listing are invertebrate species, including many insects, arachnids, and mollusks. Babbitt would rather not have to tell property owners they can't use their land because the Delhi Sands fly lives on it. Yet, that is exactly what he may have to tell property owners in San Bernardino County, California, if the fly is listed this fall, which Interior biologists say is a foregone conclusion. Politically, ecosystems are much easier to defend than species most Americans wouldn't think twice about stepping on. After all, few people would grasp the ethical theory underlying the ESA's penalty of one year in prison and a $50,000 fine for swatting a Delhi Sands fly. Yet, people may well accept the notion that the fate of humanity depends on that of "ecosystems." After all, as Babbitt says, "Everything's linked." And even if they don't accept that reasoning, the National Biological Survey will ensure that they won't find out why a given area is off limits to human use.

Definition Time

IF ECOSYSTEMS are so important, then it might be worth finding out what one is. According to John Fay, an Interior Department biologist, "You can't get three scientists in a room to agree on what an ecosystem is." One high-level Interior Department official says that "an ecosystem can be an area as small as an acre . . . or can be a very big system such as Yellowstone National Park." In fact, according to the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, the Yellowstone ecosystem is actually much larger than the park itself—encompassing as much as twenty million acres. Earlier, the Coalition had identified that ecosystem as a six-million-acre area. For an ostensibly scientific concept, then, ecosystems are surprisingly subjective. When asked to give a definition at the first hearing on the National Biological Survey in July, Secretary Babbitt responded that an ecosystem "is in the eye of the beholder."

Scary, but true, according to the Forest Service's "National Hierarchical Framework of Ecological Units for Ecosystem Classification," which defines ecosystems as "places where life and environment interact." Clearly, the beholder's eye is looking at an ecosystem whenever it is open.



"I got rich, Dad—where did I go wrong?"

The legal problem for regulators like Babbitt is that 60 per cent of America's "ecosystems" are privately owned. Perhaps that is why Babbitt talks of "discarding the concept of property and trying to find a different understanding of natural landscape." He wants to do away with "the individualistic view of property," and adopt instead a more "communitarian interpretation," based on the notion that "you can't build fences around property." This is heady stuff.

Historically, government has regulated land use to prevent nuisances. A nuisance is a harm, such as killing the flowers in a neighbor's garden. Simultaneously, government has sought to protect fugitive resources, such as air, water, and wildlife. These transient entities are imbued with a certain "publicness" because they are unowned in the eyes of the law. An ecosystem, however, consists of trees, shrubs, grass, soil, and rocks—the very things of which private property is comprised. If individuals can no longer own the sedentary elements of property, then to what exactly do they have title? In a world run by ecosystem managers, the right to private property would amount to the privilege to pay taxes. Owners would become renters on a federal estate, losing every meaningful incentive to care for the land.

Instead of preventing nuisances, the ESA is forcing landowners to provide public goods. Because wildlife is not privately owned in the U.S., as it can be in parts of Europe and Africa, landowners have no claims against their neighbors' land-use practices that harm resident wildlife. The public does. But the majority of the public's wildlife depends upon privately owned habitat.

This is not, however, an insoluble dilemma. If, as E. O. Wilson of Harvard and Paul Ehrlich of Stanford wrote in a 1991 issue of *Science*, we must "cease developing any more relatively undisturbed land" so as to preserve "bio-diversity," then the public should simply ante up. If the urban majority value wildlife as much as the polls tell us they do, then they should cease compelling the rural minority to provide habitat at their own peril and expense. The Federal Government does not force urban dwellers to grow flowers—yet flowers abound. In fact, they are grown and bought without coercion. Nor do we as a society force defense contractors to build bombs for free. Providing the public good that is habitat for America's wildlife should be similarly viewed—and thus, if anything, should be rewarded, and not punished.

The ESA needs other reforms as well. The scientific criteria for listing species must be tightened, not loosened. The scope of federal control should be restricted, not expanded. The last thing landowners need to hear on the eve of reform is what Babbitt told *Rolling Stone*: "We don't have any guidelines. All we have is a legal mandate and your desire to use your land. Now, let's see if we can work it out." □

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

August 26, 1993

Dear Rusty,

Things have finally quieted down here. With Bill, HRC, CC, and the rest of the gang up on Martha's Vineyard, I've finally got a few moments to myself.

To tell you the truth, Rusty, I've never been a fan of the Vineyard. Oh, back when I was an undergrad at Harvard—before I decided to serve my country in Vietnam (others made a different choice—I'm not judging)—we'd all go down to the Vineyard for the weekend to look at the wetlands. But I've always thought the place was a little too stiff and uptight.

But Bill and HRC are having a good time, and that's what counts. Boy, did that guy need a vacation! Before he left, we were in a big meeting, trying to chart out the next few months. Let me tell you, there's some juggling to be done: we've got to figure out a way to reinvent the government, create a National Health Care plan, pass NAFTA, and start installing a nationwide technological superhighway.

We were all there in the meeting: me, Bill, HRC, George Stephanopoulos, Mr. Gergen—the whole team, except for Mack McLarty and Vernon Jordan, who I think were already on the Vineyard making sure all the bridges on the island were in full working order. Apparently that's a source of some concern.

Anyway, Mr. Gergen came up with the idea of setting up another war room, like the one we had during the campaign and the budget negotiations.

"Terrific idea, Mr. Gergen," Bill said.

"I know, Bill, but thanks anyway," Mr. Gergen said, smiling. "We can set it up on the third floor of EOB."

"This is the health-care war room, right?" HRC asked. She looked kind of panicked. She's been looking that way a lot lately. "I'm going to need my own war room for health care. I mean, I can get my own war room, can't I, Mr. Gergen?"

"Of course, Hillary."

This gave me an idea. "Mr. Gergen, I think I need a war room too, for the NPR."

Bill looked puzzled. "You need a war room for National Public Radio, Al? But they're on our side."

"I think what Al means, Bill," Mr. Gergen chimed in, "is the National Performance Review. You know, my idea to reinvent government? And yes, Al, I think you should have a war room, too."

George Stephanopoulos raised a hand. "But wouldn't that . . ."

"I'm talking, George," Mr. Gergen said softly.

"You're right. I'm sorry. I'm going to the kitchen. Anyone want a Diet Coke?"

We all shook our heads and George left the office. He needs a vacation too, I thought to myself.

Someone brought up NAFTA, and it was decided to set up a NAFTA war room. (I think it was my idea.) As we were discussing ways to push NAFTA through Congress, I suddenly realized that Ron Brown wasn't there. I asked Mr. Gergen where he was.

"At a fund-raising breakfast."

I checked my watch. "But it's two o'clock. Don't most fund-raising breakfasts end by nine?"

Bill spoke up. "In fairness to Ron, Al, I think this is his third or fourth today. Am I right?"

"You're right," Mr. Gergen replied.

He was about to adjourn the meeting when Bill raised his hand.

"What about the idea of setting up a war room for handling the situation in Somalia. Or in Bosnia, for that matter. I mean, what better reason for a war room than a real war, right?"

Mr. Gergen peered at Bill quizzically. "I don't get your point, Bill."

"Forget it. Dumb idea. Let's go to the beach."

And with that, he adjourned the meeting, and all three went off to pack for their vacation. A couple of hours later, Vernon Jordan dropped by my office on his way to the helicopter to fly to the Vineyard. He was carrying a huge armload of files.

"Taking a lot of work to the Vineyard, Vernon?"

"No way. These are my presidential vacation press clippings so far. Can I leave them here? I don't want Gergen to see them."

"Sure." His request made sense. Mr. Gergen likes to be "at the intersection of communication and policy," as he puts it, and I've noticed that he gets bent out of shape if anyone gets to that intersection before he does. That's fair. Heck, I'd be pretty steamed if someone tried to reinvent government before me! We've all got our territory, Rusty.

"Al, could you do something else for me?"

"Sure."

"While we're all on the island, could you tape the network news for me? And CNN?"

"All day?" I asked, surprised.

"No. Just when I'm on with the President."

I told him I would. It's the least I can do. He was looking at a hot, two-hour helicopter ride, followed by a week of constant media attention, photographers everywhere, parties—the whole bit. Meanwhile, I get to roll up my sleeves, dig in, and do the people's business. Rusty, I lucked out again.

Write soon, Al

Education Theme Park

THE RETURN OF THE DINOSAURS

Old ideas don't always fade away.
The idea that there is nothing wrong
with our schools that money wouldn't cure
is proving the next thing to indestructible.

CHESTER E. FINN JR.

AFTER THE political meteors that smashed into the nation over the past quarter-century and altered its education-policy climate, I dared to suppose that two hoary beliefs were following the dinosaurs into oblivion. First, the conviction that U.S. schools are doing a satisfactory job for most youngsters, which was shaken by *A Nation at Risk* and sundry other studies in the early 1980s. Second, the assumption that education quality is best gauged by the level of resources expended and services delivered, which was jolted by research showing a tenuous relationship between money and pupil achievement. (See Rich Lowry's and Barbara Lerner's perceptive discussions of "opportunity" standards in *NR*'s July 19 issue.)

Endangered beliefs, to be sure, don't vanish immediately. In remote locales and salubrious micro-climates, they may linger on for decades. But these two once-dominant education ideas had at least retreated from view. And their absence enabled some important new understandings to catch on: that we have an acute education-quality problem; that it will be solved (if at all) not by appropriating added funds but by rewriting the system's ground rules; that "civilian" rather than "expert" control of education is essential; and that results, not inputs, are the only true indices of performance.

Nourished by these insights, some new and quite different species of education reform emerged during the past decade. They included "choice" policies under which families could select any public school in their community, even their state; the advent of privately funded (and, in Milwaukee, publicly supported) "voucher" projects enabling poor children to choose non-government schools; widening acceptance of "charter" schools, now enacted by seven states; "break the mold" designs for novel schools, including those supported by the New American Schools Development Corporation and conceived by Christopher Whittle's Edison Project; alternative certification so that teachers could get public-school posts without passing through colleges of education; devolution of decision-making from downtown bureaucracies to school-site councils; standards, assessment, and accountability programs with teeth; even the management of some public schools (notably in Miami and Baltimore) by private firms.

Such measures differ markedly from the typical reforms of the Eighties. They jettison traditional assumptions, sloughing off the conventional constraints and shifting familiar power relationships. Compared to what had passed for educational change in the Sixties and Seventies, the evolution was mind-boggling.

They're Back

BUT EDUCATION's dinosaurs are now returning; indeed, they had never truly become extinct. Even as new reform ideas came into being, the older genetic code continued to shape the writings of more than a few "experts." Living specimens survived in colleges of education, the marble-clad headquarters of the National Education Association, and influential parts of the Democratic Party, notably the Education and Labor Committee of the House of Representatives.

The present comeback of saurian ideas can probably be traced to the publication of *Savage Inequalities*, Jonathan Kozol's much-quoted volume holding that the only serious shortcoming of U.S. education is that it spends more in some communities than in others. But his was not the only voice. Similar messages came from Gerald Bracey, an itinerant researcher last employed by the NEA; the RAND Corporation's Iris Rotberg; the Sandia National Laboratories in New Mexico; and others.

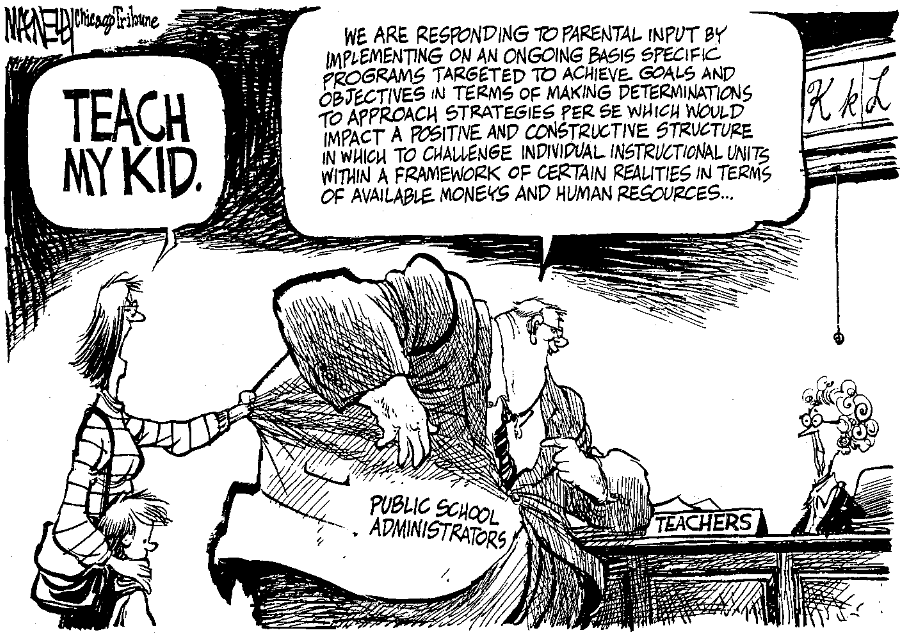
A coherent statement of their reasoning, such as it is, can be found in the spring 1993 issue of *The American*

Mr. Finn, senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and professor of education and public policy (on leave) at Vanderbilt University, served as assistant secretary of education from 1985 to 1988.

ILLUSTRATION BY FRED CARLSON

Prospect, a self-styled "journal for the liberal imagination." Entitled "The Myth of Public School Failure," the essay was written by Richard Rothstein, research associate at the labor-affiliated Economic Policy Institute. His argument is similar to the others. It goes like this:

Today's schools may not be perfect, but they're producing the skills that employers actually demand. By various gauges, they're doing a better job today than formerly, despite meager growth in their disposable resources. (Most added school spending of the past quarter-century, according to Rothstein's calculations, has gone for "special" social and education programs, not for improvements in regular classrooms.) *Though school bureaucracy may inhibit creativity, it costs little—and its controls prevent discrimination and maintain "minimum academic standards." So it's wrong to think that sweeping reforms like choice or decentralization will strengthen American education; they are solutions to non-existent problems, would probably weaken the enterprise, and, in any case, deflect attention from the one truly vital need: more money. The argument that "public-education advocates" should repeat like a mantra is that "even greater gains are likely with additional resources."*


MACNELLY Chicago Tribune
TEACH MY KID.
WE ARE RESPONDING TO PARENTAL INPUT BY IMPLEMENTING ON AN ONGOING BASIS SPECIFIC PROGRAMS TARGETED TO ACHIEVE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES IN TERMS OF MAKING DETERMINATIONS TO APPROACH STRATEGIES PER SE WHICH WOULD IMPACT A POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE STRUCTURE IN WHICH TO CHALLENGE INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTIONAL UNITS WITHIN A FRAMEWORK OF CERTAIN REALITIES IN TERMS OF AVAILABLE MONEYS AND HUMAN RESOURCES...
Kk L
PUBLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
TEACHERS

No longer can such assertions be dismissed as rare specimens bearing scant relevance to our world. For that world is changing as the dinosaurs rampage through Washington. The White House and the Education Department are occupied by a team that owes huge political debts to the education establishment and includes some who never lost their love for large reptiles. That's why people like Rothstein must be taken seriously. Though his argument contains a huge contradiction at its heart—if today's schools are doing a satisfactory job, why pump more cash into them?—we cannot ignore the influence of such thinking. And it's fair to note that, misguided as Rothstein is on the big points, he's partly correct on three smaller ones.

First, it's true that U.S. employers share blame for the lackluster human products emerging from our schools. If they really *insisted* on greater skills and knowledge among those they hire, that word would instantly reach the schools and would have a big impact on how hard youngsters study and how much they learn.

Second, by some gauges, American education *has* improved a bit in recent decades, notably in some narrowing of the relative achievement and graduation rates of white and minority youngsters. Yet absolute performance levels remain abysmal without regard to race, ethnicity, or gender.

Third, it's true that a chunk of our huge increase in school spending has gone to complying with federal and state mandates, particularly the education of handicapped youngsters. But these account for just a fraction of the money. Even Rothstein acknowledges that teacher salaries rose 21 per cent in real terms between 1965 and 1990, while pupil–teacher ratios fell by 30 per cent. What he fails to mention is that the regulatory strategy favored by congressional Democrats and their educator pals will surely boost the costs of complying with still more mandates from Washington, leaving even less money for the kinds of "improvements" that Rothstein favors.

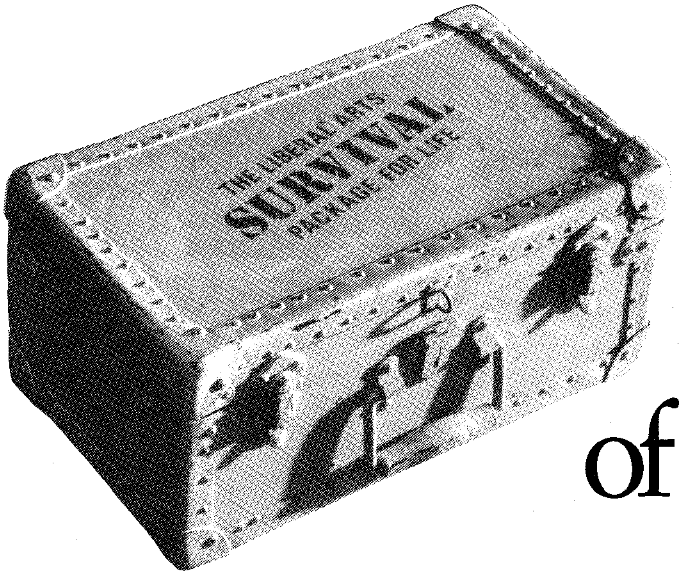
On the Offensive Again

A HANDFUL of governors, business leaders, mayors, and educators stubbornly forge on with efforts at bold reform. Governor John Engler's gutsy, high-stakes move to replace Michigan's stodgy school-finance apparatus with one more responsive to the customers exemplifies their impatience with business-as-usual and their appetite for radical alternatives. So does Jersey City Mayor Bret Schundler's voucher plan. But there aren't many such leaders abroad in the land; the school establishment has had ample practice in resisting change; and the White House and Education Department are bully pulpits not to be underestimated, especially when—in marked contrast to the previous 12 years—they're preaching what that establishment wants to hear.

Whether it's the upcoming California referendum on vouchers, recent battles in Wisconsin and Massachusetts over charter-school legislation, the pending bill in New Jersey that would give unions a veto over private contracting by school systems, brouhahas over standards in Ohio and Colorado, funding for innovative school designs, or efforts to install result-based accountability systems in any number of jurisdictions—in these and myriad other state and local contests the troops of the status quo are energized by the conviction that their ideas and interests are backed by the nation's new leaders.

Testing, accordingly, is out of favor. So are choice, alternative certification, and charter schools. Vouchers, of course, are anathema. Spending-equalization lawsuits, by contrast, are in, as are efforts to turn schools into social- and medical-service centers. National education standards, evolving backward from a concern with results to an obsession with inputs, could yet make matters worse. (*Mea culpa*. For several years, I was among those promoting the standards move-

NATIONAL REVIEW'S SHOWCASE OF RECOMMENDED SCHOOLS



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> *"There is no such thing as a value free education...Those who would attempt to educate young men and women without transmitting values are transmitting the belief that permanency and moral positions are not important. That belief, in and of itself, is a value, an improper one, which can only lead us down the path of servitude."*
>
> —Russell Nichols
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ment, never imagining the twist it might take.) Even the word "outcomes" has become tainted, thanks, on the one hand, to overreaching reformers who added children's attitudes to their lists of mandatory school results and, on the other hand, to fundamentalist parents for whom even "critical thinking" may resemble an assault on the ramparts of their faith.

Washington, of course, has a climate in which all sorts of prehistoric beasts are known to thrive. Both parties feed them. With the Clinton Administration tossing raw meat to archaic education notions, we ought not to have expected congressional Democrats to erect obstacles to their return. But in the current legislative round, the Republicans have scarcely lifted a finger to stop them. Representative Dick Armey did offer a solid alternative to the Clinton plan, yet most of his GOP colleagues on the Education and Labor Committee joined the Democrats in voting it down. On the Senate side, all but three committee Republicans cast their ballots in support of the Administration proposals. Few of the two dozen presidential aspirants have uttered a syllable on this topic. Nor has Ross Perot, notwithstanding his record as an education radical in Texas. When Congress comes back from summer vacation, its version of the Clinton scheme—think of it as the Dinosaur Rehabilitation Act of 1993—is likely to become law. The sole hope for deleting its most vexing features lies in mounting bipartisan opposition from state governors, a handful of business leaders, and a few valorous educators. They may yet undo some damage on the Senate floor, though any gains are apt to be lost in conference with the House.

Uncle Sam's leverage over U.S. education is greater than his 6 or 7 per cent of the school budget would indicate. (Recall the vast trauma caused by mandatory busing, largely a creation of the federal judiciary.) And the money will surely prove tempting at a time when state and local budgets are so strapped.

Elementary/secondary education in the U.S. is a $300-billion industry employing upward of 5 million people and enrolling some 45 million youngsters. Who controls it, how it is governed, the beliefs that animate it, and the terms (and sums) by which it is financed are matters of clear and present significance to our politics, economy, and culture.

Vast as the system is, it's not big enough for dinosaurs and radical reforms to coexist for long. They're mortal enemies, the existence of each an affront to the other's legitimacy as well as its survival. If one had to give odds, the near term seems to favor the dinosaurs. Over the longer haul, however, given everything we know about American attitudes and priorities, the radicals are apt to prevail. The dinosaurs will again retreat. But this awaits a new epoch. □

The Schools: Four Reports

HIGH-TECH HUSTLE

EDWARD L. LEDERMAN

"EVERY CLASS Needs Computer, Jeffco Panel Says," read a *Rocky Mountain News* headline. Coast to coast the latest fad in public-education "reform" is technology—mostly computers, but also fiber optics and video multi-media hardware. No grant proposal, no model-school outline sees the light of day without detailing how it approach will replace the teacher's desk with "an Electronic Teaching Center"; "make extensive use of computers, databases, and networks"; reduce staff costs by "reconfiguring how teachers are used in the classroom"; or use "computer, multi-media, and interactive video technologies in virtually every activity students undertake."

The use of new technologies in education breaks down into three distinct areas: 1) information retrieval and communication; 2) the teaching of mathematical and scientific concepts; and 3) the enhancement of the teaching and learning process in general—e.g., IBM's Writing to Read program for children in the early grades.

The first of these has far and away the greatest advantages and the fewest drawbacks. Computers with modems make the catalogues of libraries—locally and nationwide—instantly accessible. Shorter works, such as magazine articles or encyclopedia entries, can be obtained directly without straying from one's PC. On the communication side of this field, there are programs like "Star Schools," promoted by Diane Ravitch, assistant secretary for research in the Bush Administration's Education Department. Star Schools use interactive television and computers to enable students in remote parts of the country to take classes that would otherwise have been unavailable to them. Eve Bether, a spokesman in the Bush Education Department, noted that "one student attending a school in Texas with only ten students per class was able to do all his physics preparation via Star Schools. Now he is at MIT." Sort of like the short-wave radio schools of the Australian outback.

The price tag for such tehnologies is relatively small ($18.4 million for Star Schools), and, more important, they don't intrude where they're not wanted. The information can be accessed, or not; the remote classrooms can carry on, or not.

More problematic is the use of computers in high-school science and math courses. Like hand-held calculators twenty years ago, computers in the classroom can permit more mate-

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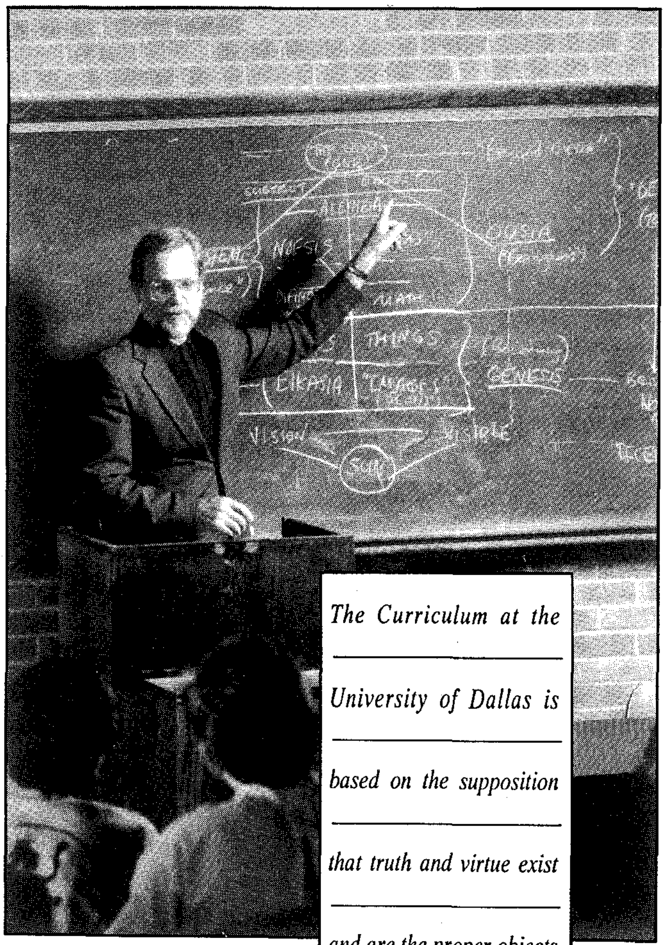
Mr. Lederman is a senior fellow of the Independence Institute, a Golden, Colorado, think tank.

NATIONAL REVIEW'S SHOWCASE OF RECOMMENDED SCHOOLS

TRUTH AND VIRTUE
FREEDOM AND JUSTICE
REVELATION AND DISCOVERY



The Curriculum at the University of Dallas is based on the supposition that truth and virtue exist and are the proper objects of search in an education.

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rial to be covered by speeding up the routine calculations. But like them too, computers can obscure the fact that the students are not learning the necessary concepts. Among university science and engineering professors, the complaint of Frank Barnes, professor of electrical and computer engineering at Colorado University, Boulder, is typical: "Kids nowadays know a lot more facts because a lot more facts are thrown at them; but what you are looking for is the ability to take what knowledge you have and solve problems with it. If I put an algebra problem on the blackboard I don't want to have to explain how to solve it. I want to use it to go ahead and explain the course I am teaching. And it is in this area that I get most upset with the preparation of the students coming in."

Stanford mathematician Brad Osgood points to another problem: the misfit between the technology and the use to which it is put. "While [technology] can play a natural and an important role in calculus courses, right now it is impossible and wrong-headed to try to wedge a computer into the traditional courses, the way they have been traditionally taught. In calculus the critical preliminary issues are curricular in nature and have been with us a while. They involve the relative emphasis to be placed on calculation versus problem solving, and other related debates. Once you decide where you are going with those, then the technology should be adapted to the course, not the other way around."

Which Literacy?

BUT WHAT about the "fourth basic skill" heralded in the *Nation at Risk* report—"computer literacy"? As it happens, none of the professors I interviewed complained that their students lacked computer literacy. Many complained about the absence of other literacies. Harry Lewis, Gordon McKay Professor of Computer Science at Harvard, points out that computer literacy depends on some previous basic skills: spelling, simple math, and—of surprising importance—the ability to type.

Interestingly, Lewis has found there is no advantage, even for potential computer-science majors, in studying computer programming in high school: "The field changes quickly, and it is hard for high schools to have up-to-date curricula in this area. It is something, in general, that makes more sense to leave to college-level teaching. The most important training for people to have in order to study computer science is mathematics, which we are sorely lacking generally in high-school education."

As to the third use of computers in the classroom—for the general instruction of young children—precious little research on their effectiveness has been done, and what little there is suggests caution. Recent evaluations of IBM's Writing to Read program, for example, show it to be both more costly and less effective than traditional instruction. Ah, but there is the ineffable "sizzle" of the machine—the ease of electronic synapse; the excitement of a seven-year-old seeing his words on the screen, instantly, effortlessly.

Charles Piller, in a recent article in *Macworld*, sets out anecdotes of techno-success—stimulated and enthusiastic children corresponding with adults through computers and faxes—cheek by jowl with instances of techno-failure—machines lying fallow or being used in "computer programming" classes where nine out of ten students play video games. But hard questions need to be asked even about the successes: namely, How much of

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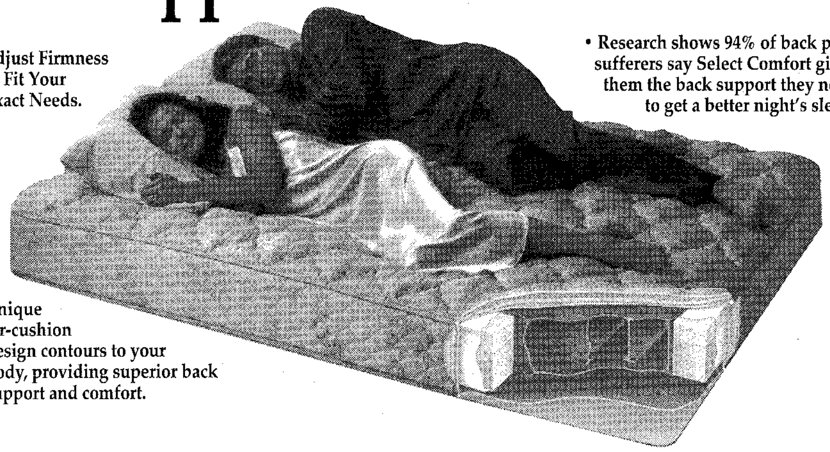

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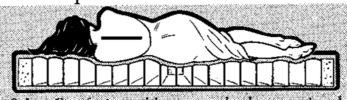

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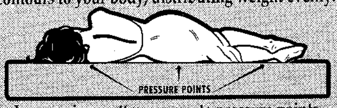

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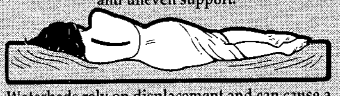

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NATIONAL REVIEW'S SHOWCASE OF RECOMMENDED SCHOOLS

ARE OUR SCHOOLS MAKING THE GRADE?

Federal funding is corrupting our educational system. Spiralling tuition costs reflect not only the administrative cost of complying with thousands of pages of regulation, but the cost of allowing Washington, D.C. to control student aid. Today, three out of every four dollars in student aid are federal dollars. Is it any wonder that colleges and universities can charge tens of thousands of dollars for tuition when they know that the government will pick up most of the tab?

Federal grants are also creating a non-teaching faculty. At at least one prestigious Ivy League university, over 50 percent of the classes are taught by graduate students. And because it holds the purse strings, the government has been able to dictate lowered admission standards, quotas and other harmful policies.

This climate of dependency has had an even more erosive effect. Our colleges and universities have lost the courage to stand up against the outlandish demands of every extreme group. Our traditions, great books and Western values are being removed from the curricula in favor of a smorgasbord of "politically correct" courses. So as tuitions increase, the value of education diminishes. And over one-half of the students entering our colleges never graduate.

It is time that the heavy hand of federal bureaucracy and control be restrained and that our colleges and universities be returned to their administrators and boards and to their own standards of performance.

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the success can be attributed to the interaction of machine, teacher, and child, and how much to the increased *attention* given the child because of the machine? Piller chronicles how kindergartners dictate letters to fifth-graders, who then "word-process" them onto the computer, at once giving the older child writing practice and enabling the younger child to connect his words to the writing on the screen and the printout. Fine. But wouldn't that work using a pen and paper? How important is the electronic "sizzle" compared with the school's commitment to writing itself?

The problem with the high-tech hustle is not so much the money it appropriates to machines and software—although as Congress hurries to finance various techno-pork projects, that is serious enough—but how it distracts us from real issues, and how it distorts our priorities. Educationese has always done a good job at camouflaging the recycling of discredited pedagogies. High-tech rhetoric ups the ante. Here is a typical sample: "Visual format will be a strong curriculum component. Students will use video and multimedia documents extensively to learn and to communicate and publish what they have learned." How would that sound if that were translated into plain English? "The kids will spend a lot of time wandering about in groups with a camcorder instead of working on individual reading, research, and writing." The low-tech rhetoric sounds less impressive, doesn't it? ☐

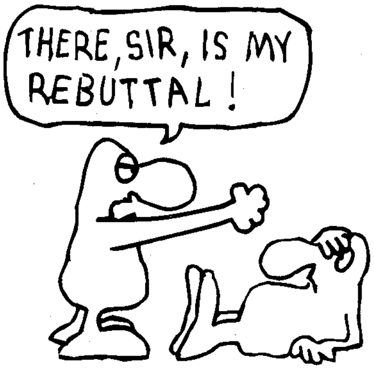
AFROCENTRISM IN THE SUBURBS

JOHN J. MILLER

WASHINGTON-AREA residents fondly refer to outlying Prince George's County, Maryland, as "PG" County. The term has recently assumed an unexpected irony. With the near-adoption of a set of multicultural curricula, students might soon need Parental Guidance in order to unravel the strange education dispensed in the nation's 15th largest school district.

The county is famous for its large black middle-class. Writing in the *New York Times Magazine*, David J. Dent called it "the closest thing to utopia that black middle-class families could find in America." But like most of suburban America, the county has found itself vulnerable to bourgeois trendiness. The board of education, which oversees a two-thirds black student population, has hit upon a race-specific fad: Afrocentrism.

In 1987 the board voted, innocently enough, to restructure its schools' curricula and expand the coverage of "race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economics, religion, region, age, and citizenship," according to board member Suzanne M. Plogman. When a nine-foot-tall stack of 32 multicultural course manuals appeared before the board for approval at the start of the 1991–92 school year, some complained that the two-week review period did not allow enough time for their proper consideration. Despite warnings from several parents, the board hustled through a vote endorsing all but two of the manuals.


THERE, SIR, IS MY REBUTTAL!

Problems with much of the approved curriculum soon emerged, and Superintendent Edward M. Felegy suspended five social-studies guides for further review. Good thing, too: Reading them, one discovers that slaves chopped sugar cane in the American Southwest; that Croatians (instead of Croatan Indians) served as the heretofore unknown levelers of the "Lost Colony" in Roanoke, North Carolina; that the English fought the British in the American Revolution; and, according to one illustration, that colonial mothers had access to electric ranges in their kitchens.

Yet these errors—some of which could be reasonably attributed to poor copy editing, though this raises its own troubling questions—only break the surface of a much deeper problem. The tenth-grade world-history manual, for instance, drenches itself in black nationalist historical revisionism. The guide starts by allowing the word "African" to slip in and out of its racial connotation enough times to ensure that ancient Egypt comes across as an exclusively black nation, a theory widely disputed by Egyptologists. The authors then cite the notorious Portland Baseline Essays, George James's *Stolen Legacy*, and other questionable reference points to reinforce their claims and state, predictably, that "Egypt was supreme in the leadership of civilization . . . Egyptian culture survived and flourished under the name and control of the Greeks."

By relying so heavily on these Afrocentric authorities, the curriculum appears more intent on engaging in racial polemics than on teaching history. Approximately 5 per cent of the world history manual's 164 pages, for instance, is devoted to making the case for black African migrations to the pre-Columbian Americas, an idea dismissed by most archaeologists and Mesoamerican experts.

All of this aims chiefly at boosting the self-esteem of black students. The increasingly familiar argument runs something like this: The school performance of black students lags behind that of whites because the black students lack a proper sense of self-worth. They live in a society that does not value them, one that constantly reminds them of their diminished status. Educators must teach all stu-

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Mr. Miller is associate director of the Manhattan Institute's Center for the New American Community.

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dents to value themselves in order for them to achieve high marks in school. As school-board member Brenda Hughes told the *Bowie Blade-News*, the county's Afrocentric curricula "will enhance [students'] self-esteem, motivate achievement, and help them to be law-abiding citizens."

Some supporters of self-esteem theory have wound up endorsing blatantly racist methods. Last year, the local Alliance of Black School Educators sponsored a conference (with the help of Coca-Cola, Giant Foods, and Safeway) entitled "Saving the African American Child through Academic and Cultural Excellence." In one session, Dr. Nsenga Warfield-Coppock spoke about female "Rites of Passage." The session's contents sprang from her *Adolescent Rites of Passage*, a book-length document made available to attendees. A chapter on biology explains that blacks "have a physiological superiority in the areas of physical coordination and spiritual access to energy and vibrations from the environment"; that "Accessing one's unconscious is easier for persons who have high levels of melanin"; and that "Melanin and the pineal gland give African Americans special intellectual and physical talents."

Even if so many of the materials used to promote self-esteem were not objectionable, the problem would still remain that self-esteem theory is unsupported by empirical evidence. Although the Supreme Court essentially institutionalized the idea in its landmark desegregation cases, *Brown* in 1954 and *Green* in 1968, more recent scholarship has questioned it. James Coleman and others have shown that desegregation actually correlates with lower black self-esteem but slightly higher black scholastic achievement. As Smith College government professor Stanley Rothman notes in a review of self-esteem literature, "it does not seem so far-fetched to suggest that whatever it is that drives individuals to succeed is as likely to be bound up with feelings of guilt, and the fear of failure, as it is with those of self-love."

A team of researchers led by University of Michigan psychologist Harold W. Stevenson offers some helpful guidance on this question. Stevenson found that academically, Asian students beat their American counterparts hands down. No surprise there. In an interesting twist, however, the researchers gauged how students perceived their own performances. While the Asian students found lots of room for improvement, the Americans were quite content. Supporters of self-esteem theory were left scratching their heads.

Even the chairman of Harvard's Afro-American studies department, Henry Louis Gates Jr., now says that self-esteem theory lacks foundation. "When Laotian students in California ace their exams, it isn't because the curriculum reinforces a rich sense of their Laotian heritage," he told a Modern Language Association audience.

A Likelier Answer

BLACK students' scores on standardized tests have increased dramatically over the last twenty years, while white students' scores have remained stable. These gains are probably not reducible to a single factor, but clearly the most important ingredient is the big rise in socioeconomic status among blacks.

If rising socioeconomic status is really the key to increased black academic achievement, then the Prince George's educrats are chasing phantoms in their quest to improve education by introducing an Afrocentric curriculum. Fortunately, the county board of education will have the opportunity to change course later this fall when it begins voting on revised versions of the suspended social-studies guides. No matter what happens, however, fiddling with the curriculum misses the big picture. What the black middle class needs most is not a curricular quick fix, but patience. With its continued growth and steady economic advances, educational gains for its children will follow.

Many Prince George's County parents escaped the squalor of urban Washington through hard work and relocated in a place less beset by crime, drugs, and other roadblocks for educational progress. How ironic that today their educators might imperil "PG" County's hard-won gains with an X-rated school curriculum. □

BETTER OFF AT HOME?

ISABEL LYMAN

CONSIDER two examples of American youth. Daniel is becoming knowledgeable about the metric system, has read the Esther Forbes classic *Johnny Tremain*, easily identifies the four states that border Mexico, can confidently define "recluse" and "esoteric," and still has time to tend goal for his ice-hockey team. Daniel is eight.

Charlotte, an equestrian with awards in dressage, doubles as a Taubman piano instructor in training. She was recently awarded a generous financial-aid package to attend Mt. Holyoke College. At 17, Charlotte was the youngest non-college student in a math course at the University of Massachusetts, and one of the few enrolled who earned an A.

What these two young people have in common is that they are members of a growing popular movement known as "homeschooling." According to *U.S. News & World Report*, the number of students taught at home grew from 10,000 in 1970 to 350,000 in 1991. The Virginia-based Home School Legal Defense Fund has estimated the number at over 400,000.

While politicos regularly campaign on a "quality day care for all working Americans" boiler-plate platform to woo busy, overtaxed constituents, homeschoolers have politely turned their backs on the idea of "professionals" teaching their offspring. Instead, they have opted for what critics, such as Thomas A. Shannon of the National School Boards Association, call "a giant step backward into the seventeenth century."

Mrs. Lyman, the mother of two homeschooling boys, is working on a doctorate in education.

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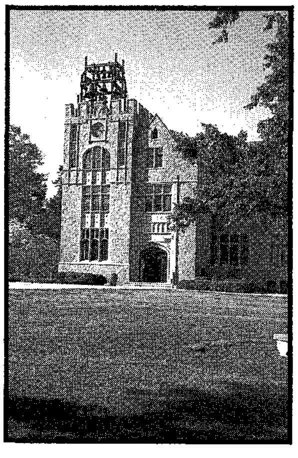

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The modern homeschooling movement had its roots, appropriately, in the 1960s. Unbeknown to one another, two educators—one a humanist, the other a former Christian missionary—were reaching the same conclusion: conventional schooling has largely failed at its task of educating and nurturing children.

John Holt was a veteran teacher in alternative-style schools when his book *Why Children Fail* was published in 1962. His thesis was that children's curiosity can be killed by a system that is ill-suited to individual learning needs. Mr. Holt's twin slogans—"Living is learning" and "Growing without schooling"—have become the philosophical backbone for the wing of the movement that veers to the left.

At about the same time, Dr. Raymond Moore was conducting an aggressive inquiry into previously unstudied areas. One of the questions he set out to answer was: Is the institutionalizing of young children a sound educational policy? Amazingly, he discovered that the findings of a hundred noted researchers (including eminent family psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner) recommended "a cautious approach to subjecting the developing nervous system and mind [of children] to formal constraints."

Dr. Moore's data led him and his wife, Dorothy (a reading specialist), to pioneer a renewed and enthusiastic interest in homeschooling through their research institute, the Moore Foundation. The Moores' firm, gentle, and ecumenical approach to homeschooling (balance study, work, and service with a child's developmental needs) have earned them a following that started with fundamentalist Christians but has since spread widely.

Balancing the Ledger

FOLLOWING one of these alternatives has been neither cheap nor easy for potential homeschoolers. As recently as 1982, only two states had laws guaranteeing their rights. Legislative and court battles fought throughout the 1980s now make homeschooling legal in all fifty states, although homeschoolers' legal status varies from state to state. For example, Oregon requires that homeschooled children periodically take standardized tests; Texas homeschoolers can simply declare their home a private school; Massachusetts homeschoolers have to obtain permission from local authorities.

To be sure, homeschoolers do get some help. Teaching supplies, computer software, cassettes, videos, etc. are proliferating. An October 1991 U.S. Department of Education Working Paper, by Patricia M. Lines, explains that "there are approximately 25 suppliers supplying a complete, year-long package, and with at least one-hundred students enrolled."

Unlike families in earlier days whose children were "privately educated," the average homeschooler today is far from rich. A 1990 survey of Maine home-schoolers by the David C. Cook Publishing Company, for example, revealed that 70 per cent of respondents had an annual pre-tax household income of less than $35,000. Why would these parents undertake such a burden?

Homeschooling is far more flexible than conventional schooling. Homeschoolers can supplement their children's educations with private lessons, apprenticeships, correspondence courses, and hobbies. And it seems effective. In fact, the National Home Education Institution (yes, a homeschool think tank), in a recent nationwide study, "found achievement on standardized tests was at or above the eightieth percentile."

Even more important, homeschooling protects children from condom distribution, multicultural mumbo jumbo, new-age relaxation techniques, knife-wielding sophomores, etc. While smaller, religious schools are often a significant improvement over the public schools, there is no guarantee that students will be spared the difficulties that occur when *X* number of students are warehoused together on a daily basis.

In addition, homeschooling helps children avoid the negative social aspects of school life by promoting a strong family bond. The trump card the educational establishment used to play against homeschooling is socialization, but the notion that homeschoolers are misfits has been struck a death blow by a young man named Larry Shyers. Dr. Shyers recently completed a doctoral dissertation in which he challenged the myth that youngsters schooled at home "lag" in social development. In his study, eight-to-ten-year-old children were videotaped at play. Their behavior was observed by trained counselors who did not know which children went to regular schools and which were homeschooled. Their conclusion: "The study found no big difference between the two groups of children in self-concept or assertiveness, which was measured by their social development tests. But the videotapes showed that youngsters who were taught at home by their parents had consistently fewer behavioral problems."

While not a panacea for all the educational ills of our age, homeschooling clearly deserves to be supported as generously as choice in fighting the cultural and moral relativism of the ever-fading Western civilization. Homeschooling families could use some help in their lonely battles against the foes of liberty, individual responsibility, and learning. ☐

FREE THE SCHOOLS

ALAN BONSTEEL, MD

WHEN I had last been in Berlin, in 1988, the Wall still stood. The train trip through East Germany by night was eerie, passing row after row of barbed wire and flying past train stations boarded up since the end of the World War II. Little did I guess that within a year the gates would be thrown open. I watched on television as delirious crowds danced to Beethoven's "Ode to Joy."

Dr. Bonsteel is a physician from San Ramon, California, and a volunteer worker for the Parental Choice in Education Initiative.

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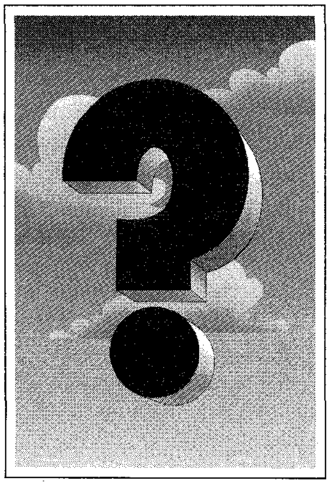

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Or as W.E.B. Du Bois (himself a graduate of Harvard, the Adelphi of Massachusetts) once put it, "the purpose of education is not to make men carpenters, but to make carpenters men." Substitute "lawyers" or "bankers" for "carpenters," and you get the idea.

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Now, in April of 1993, I was returning to a reborn Berlin, to the annual conference of the European Council of National Associations of Independent Schools (ECNAIS). Berlin had been chosen as the site because of the rapidly emerging independent-school sector in the former Soviet Union and its satellites. Seventy delegates from fourteen countries, including six former Communist countries, gathered in this reborn city.

The conference was held at the Kreuzberg Waldorfschule, which in many ways symbolizes Germany's free schools. During the Second World War, Hitler outlawed altogether the "nonconformist" Waldorf schools developed by Rudolf Steiner, which share with the Montessori schools a philosophy of experiential learning. The Nazis also closed all Jewish private schools and cracked down with an iron fist on Catholic schools. After the war the West Germans, determined never to repeat this mistake, guaranteed in their new constitution the right of all children, regardless of family income, to a private-school education. Although the German government has never appropriated enough money to allow this concept to grow to its full potential, more than 6 per cent of all elementary and secondary students in the new unified Germany attend independent schools, which get along nicely with about two-thirds of the per-student expenditures of the public schools.

The Kreuzberg Waldorfschule is in an old building that was so close to the Berlin Wall that the sun was blocked off on one side. After the Wall came down, the school acquired an old Stasi secret-police station nearby in former East Berlin. The wires that had been used to bug telephones in the neighborhood were torn out and used as building materials for the playground, and the new annex became known affectionately as the "hole-in-the-wall" school. The eighth-graders of the school performed Schiller's *William Tell* for us, a play that embodies the spirit of freedom.

In the continuing debate about freedom in schooling in the United States, many commentators still overlook just how far out of step is the American centralized system of elementary and secondary government education. All the other developed countries offer more freedom of choice than we do.

Having visited independent schools in nine countries over the last fourteen years, I was at the conference to learn the latest trends in freedom in schooling, and to represent—alone, as it turned out—the United States.

Europeans are well aware of the poor quality of American public education and the frightening problems of guns and violence in our public schools. I wasn't altogether surprised, therefore, when I was asked to report on the several state initiatives which would provide the same freedom of educational choice to all that now only the wealthy enjoy.

At the break I was approached by one of Poland's delegates, a bubbly physicist named Elzbieta Putkiewicz. With an ear-to-ear smile, she told me, "Poland now has five hundred free schools supported by the Solidarity government at 30 to 50 per cent of the public-school rate per student. Maybe you Americans could learn from our experience?"

"That's very interesting," I replied, "but what do you mean 30 to 50 per cent? How does the government decide which it will be?"

"Oh, it's not like that," she giggled. "The government doesn't know how much it's spending!"

I had to laugh as well. In our own campaign for educational choice in California, school district after school district has claimed to be spending less than the basic Average Daily Attendance subsidy from the state.

Many of the Eastern European delegates were genuinely surprised to learn that in the United States, elementary and secondary education has remained a state monopoly. Several asked me why American voters would tolerate a "Soviet-style" education system. The best I could offer was that we do, at least, have freedom of choice in higher education, and we do have world-class universities.

How Others Do It

IN 1987 I spent a month studying Denmark's system of free choice of schools. I visited schools for the handicapped, schools for ethnic minorities, and an "international school." I remember especially a school specializing in the fine arts. Although I arrived virtually unannounced, the school was neat and clean, and the students were all busily at work. The teacher who showed me around saw my astonishment and commented, "You know, Alan, it's a joy to teach in this school, because the students have *chosen* to be here and they *value* what we have to offer." Where is the American public-school teacher who could say as much?

In 1988 I spent a month in the Netherlands studying its system of educational freedom of choice, a right enshrined in its constitution. I met a grand total of one Dutchman who thought his country might be better off with an American-style compulsory government school system, and even he cheerfully admitted that he'd never in his life met another Dutchman who agreed with him. The closest the Dutch have come to any controversy about their fundamental values was when Islamic families grew numerous enough to demand their own school. Dutch liberalism and tolerance won out, however, and in 1987 the first Islamic school opened. Today there are five.

In Spain, about a third of all children attend independent schools. The Spanish delegates at the ECNAIS conference complained that their prime minister was trying to cut back independent school funding, even though he was a product of a private school and was sending his own daughter to a private school, "just like Bill Clinton."

In France, an attempt by the government in 1984 to take away government-funded independent schools was met by the largest nationwide demonstrations in French history—larger even than the anti–Vietnam War demonstrations of the 1960s. A million and a half citizens fought for, and won, the right to keep *l'école libre*.

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Mason, commented in Berlin about the unfortunate implications of American terminology regarding schools. Mason, a British intelligence officer during the Second World War, was for many years headmaster of the Manchester Grammar School.

"I don't like the term 'private school' at all," he said. "It implies exclusivity and elitism, and a school that accepts students from all walks of life who bring with them their fair share of educational tax dollars is anything but that. As well, the terminology in Great Britain is the reverse of yours: in the sixteenth century, when *all* schools were private, the better private schools that accepted students from all over England became known as 'public' schools, and the name has stuck to this day. We prefer the terms 'independent school' or 'free school,' and I wish you in America would adopt the same terminology."

Nor does the word "public school" carry the same meaning in our country that it used to. America's public-school system is in fact extraordinarily heavily segregated in terms both of race and of economic class, a result of our insistence on assigning students to a particular school based on geographical residence.

Many Americans, shocked to see our public schools failing to supply textbooks, paper, and pencils to students, jump to the conclusion that the problem is lack of money. In fact, U.S. per-student expenditures, having risen 83 per cent in constant dollars between 1970 and 1987, are now higher than those of any other country in the world except Switzerland. Expressing the totals as a percentage of GNP makes us look only slightly better; Canada and the United Kingdom pull up even with us, and Switzerland stays ahead, but all other nations still lag behind. We are now spending 77 per cent more per student than Germany, for example, which has a slightly higher standard of living than we do and has far better educational outcomes.

The issue goes far beyond simply a question of quality. There is a creativity, an energy, a vitality in free schools. There is a commitment that comes from having freely chosen.

As the conference ended and I caught a taxi to Berlin's Tempelhof airport, I suddenly remembered something I'd forgotten to do. I asked the driver to stop at a souvenir stand so that I could buy a keepsake of my visit—a stone from the old Berlin Wall.

If the Berlin Wall could come down, I told myself, perhaps an American educational system that works isn't the impossible dream after all. ☐

Reversing the Stereotypes

THE TEXTBOOK WARS

When does a 'censor' become a 'positive pressure group'? Ask Holt Rinehart.

STEPHEN BATES

IT HAS become one of journalism's autumn perennials: Book-burners are conspiring to relegate our children to ignorance. Read a bit further in the articles and, almost invariably, the would-be censors turn out to be conservatives.

Most book protests do indeed originate with the Right. Contrary to censorship experts, however, that's not because conservatives alone seek to inject their views into the classroom. Liberals are no less eager to shape schoolbooks; they just go about it differently.

A fuller accounting of both sides' efforts and impacts is now possible, thanks to a unique trove of information: 2,261 pages of internal files from the schoolbook publisher Holt, Rinehart & Winston. Subpoenaed during the mid-1980s lawsuit *Mozert* v. *Hawkins County Board of Education*, these documents chart the evolution of Holt Basic Reading, a kindergarten-through-eighth-grade textbook series.

The memos and reports (supplemented with interviews) offer an uncommonly revealing glimpse into the secretive world of textbook development. They show that activists from both sides inundated Holt editors with complaints—some valid, some preposterous, and most in between. The difference is in how their complaints were treated.

Rocky Start

THOUGH Holt Basic Reading became a rousing success, dominating the reading market for years, it had a rocky start. The first edition was barely off the presses in 1973 when a Texas group charged that it lacked sufficient "stories with heroines," and the self-styled Task Force on Sexism called for its prompt *"elimination."* As the date for California's textbook adoptions neared, a Holt sales representative predicted that "we may squeeze through this time with only a minimum amount of changes, but by the next adoption, we will not be so fortunate."

"There, of course, has been some criticism of *sexism*—and we are guilty to a point," senior author Bernard J. Weiss conceded in a 1974 memo. He and his co-authors, along with staff editors at Holt, had been working on the books since 1967—"before the strong emergence of the Women's Movement," as one memo noted. In the books and accompanying filmstrips, consequently, women and girls were "generally relegated to the background."

In the background, moreover, females rarely strayed from stereotypic niches. The workbook for the first-grade reader declared that books called *Dolls* and *Dresses* were "for girls," and asked who should read *Trains* and *Planes*; the right answer, according to the teachers' edition, was boys. Illustrations showed boys running, playing rambunctiously, and working with tools, while girls baked

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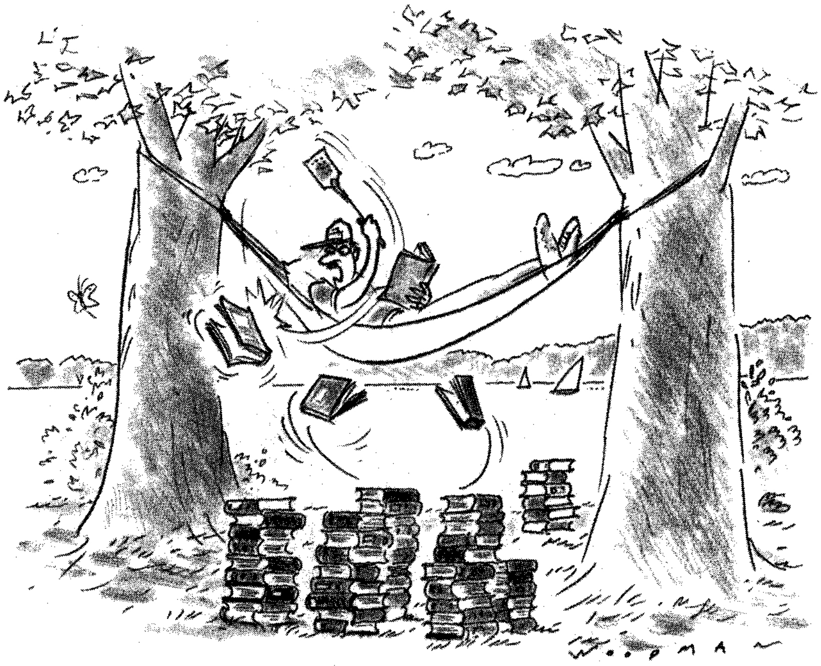
Mr. Bates is the author of the forthcoming Battleground: One Mother's Crusade, the Religious Right, and the Struggle for Control of Our Classrooms *(Poseidon), from which portions of this article are drawn.*

cookies, drew pictures, and cut out paper dresses. During development and production of the series, former Holt executive Thomas J. Murphy recalls, "nobody thought about how sexist the damn stuff was. . . . Women designers, women editors, women authors—nobody."

The depiction of race and ethnicity raised hackles too. In California in 1974, the Standing Committee to Review Textbooks from a Multicultural Perspective (that's right: multiculturalism in 1974) detected racism in such phrases as "the afternoon turned black," "it's going to be a black winter," and "the deputy's face darkened."

The multicultural committee also discerned an offensive Christian bias in the books. "Generally, the story of creation as told according to the Judaeo-Christian teachings is serious and presented in a factual way," the group charged. "Other non-Christian teachings about the origin of man or creation are treated as being highly imaginative, strange, and consequently false. Religious holidays are exclusively Christian."



"In a revision we need to do all that is financially possible to correct this situation," wrote Barbara Theobald, a staff editor assigned to the series. Using materials borrowed from "one of our editors, Ms. Virginia Vida, [who] is active in the Women's Liberation movement," Miss Theobald drafted new guidelines for the 1977 edition of the series.

The 1977 changes, Mr. Murphy says now, constituted "a very political revision. We were counting heads as to whether we had 50 per cent females, whether we had every minority group represented."

Subsequent guidelines grew more elaborate. Opening with an epigram from Walt Whitman—"The Female equally with the Male I sing"—one version said that men should not be "brutish, violent, crude, harsh, or insensitive," and women should not be "fearful, squeamish, passive, dependent, weepy, mechanically inept, frivolous, shrewish, nagging, [or] easily defeated by simple problems." Girls should work with electricity, study insects, and solve math problems. Boys should read poetry, chase butterflies, and pay "attention to personal appearance and hygiene." Forbidden words included *manmade* (use *synthetic*), *workmanlike* (use *competent*), *plainsman* (use *plainsdweller*), *statesman* (use *diplomat*), and *letterman* (use *student who has won a school letter*).

The guidelines were equally punctilious when it came to race, ethnicity, and age. Blacks must not be "in low-paying jobs, unemployed, or on welfare," but rather "in professions at all levels." American Indians should be "involved in the American mainstream" rather than on reservations, and they too mustn't be "in low-paying jobs, unemployed, or on welfare." ("Unfortunately," Miss Theobald noted in a memo, "the reality for the Indian in our society falls into all of the *avoids*.") Asian Americans and Hispanics must speak English. Jews must not work in "stereotypical occupations," such as "diamond cutters, doctors, dentists, lawyers, classical musicians, tailors, shopkeepers, etc." Older people should not be depicted as living in nursing homes, wearing glasses, using canes or wheelchairs, or "in rocking chairs, knitting, napping, and watching television."

"When selecting authors and stories and when writing art and photo specs," the guidelines directed, "be sure to familiarize yourself with the latest U.S. population figures so that our materials reflect current statistics." "Counting and chart-keeping," said the guidelines, "should not be regarded as a useless editorial exercise. Careful tallies and analysis of how people are represented will reduce the need for costly reprint corrections and may prevent the loss of an adoption." One memo reported soberly on a particular volume: "The in-house count shows 146 female and 146 male characters, or a ratio of 1:1. Animal characters were not included in this count."

Editors struggled to meet the quotas. They ransacked the archives in search of an illustration of frontier families in which women as well as men carried guns. With the authors' permission, they changed characters' gender and ethnicity in some stories. "Freddie in the Middle," featuring Mrs. Jay, became "Maggie in the Middle," featuring Mrs. Chang.

More often, editors dropped materials by or about white males in favor of new materials. But finding the replacements wasn't easy. One editor lamented: "We simply could not find a good story with an Asian-American female lead."

The Holt files indicate that gender and ethnicity sometimes trumped other considerations, including literary quality. Miss Theobald observed that a particular story was "not great literature" but "we gain two points—a female leading character and characters with Spanish-American names." Another editor concurred that the story had "very little literary merit," but "it does help us to achieve some ethnic balance in a very *unbalanced* book." "I agree that this is not the greatest 'Indian' selection," an editor wrote of another story, "but we were very hard pressed to find anything better." "Two girls may be featured," Mr. Weiss remarked of one selection, "but that's the only positive statement I can make about this play."

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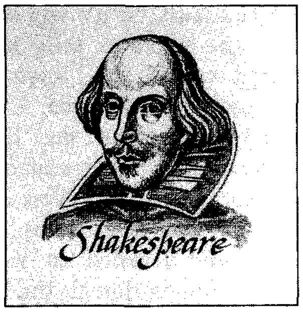

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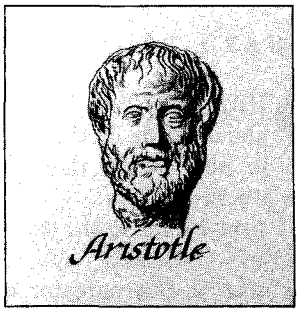

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Weiss also dissented from some of the linguistic mandates. "I feel we are reflecting too much paranoia in eliminating a word like 'mankind,'" he wrote in one letter; in another, he impishly used *peoplekind* rather than the Holt-decreed *humankind.* He also resisted changing *man-eating shark* to *flesh-eating shark*; "being an hors d'oeuvre," he reasoned, "is not sexist." One staff member grumbled that Weiss's "attitude generally about the material we sent him by and about women and minorities ill befits the author of a modern reading series."

Just as stories won points for featuring females and minorities, they lost points for featuring religion. Barbara Theobald liked the "strong female character and Amish culture" in one story, but she worried that it contained "quite a few religious references that may be difficult to handle." She thought that another submission "might be more than we want to get involved with" because it "raises many sensitive controversial issues—drinking, religion, hard times."

As strenuously as Holt editors labored, though, the critics weren't placated. Seattle's Ethnic Bias Review Committee judged the 1977 revision "unacceptable" because "while blacks are emphasized, it is a narrow representation of those in athletics and music," and because the series contained an intolerable stereotype—a black waiter. At the Texas textbook hearings in 1980, feminists disputed Holt's claim that the readers manifested a perfect gender balance. With animals included in the count (Holt had omitted them), males outnumbered females nearly 2 to 1. "Children of this age," one woman testified, "are influenced by a story about Mr. Rabbit just as much as they are by a story about Mr. Jones."

During the same hearings, NOW representative Twiss Butler denounced a story in which a boy initially dislikes his new female teacher ("I don't want to go to any gal teacher"), but later, after seeing her hit a home run, excitedly announces that she "can play on my side anytime." The boy's initial hostility, Miss Butler testified, was "the same old story: A mere schoolboy can oppose a woman's right to hold a job if he feels threatened by her competence." His turnabout also connoted patriarchy: "Well, her credentials are worthless until she meets the standards that he sets for approval."

"Some of the selections which we perceive to be positive responses end up being criticized most severely," Barbara Theobold noted. "We obviously have to read every selection at least once from the point of view of some of these critics." She suggested that Holt ask Twiss Butler and the director of the far-left Council on Interracial Books for Children to review the company's anti-bias guidelines.

In other instances too, Holt deferred to outsiders. Explaining why a particular story was eliminated from a revision, an editor said that it "is the example used by many 'cultural' advisory councils of what *not* to do. We didn't *dare* leave this one in!" "With regard to the offensive portrayal of Negroid facial characteristics on page 22," another editor wrote, ". . . the artist is himself a Negro. When we questioned his interpretation, he was very vocal in defending what he did. We didn't think we could impose our white eyes on his artistic interpretation." In thanking a college professor for sending a student's analysis of sexism in the Holt readers, one Holt staff member confessed that "some of our prejudices are so ingrained it is difficult to recognize them."

In fact, out of the 2,261 pages of in-house documents, only one memo exhibits animosity toward the feminists and multiculturalists. In 1974, Japanese-American activist Jeanette Arakawa, who was associated with the California multicultural committee, criticized the Holt readers on TV. "We even met with [Miss Arakawa] in June," a Holt sales representative fumed. "We are trying to cooperate with these people—talking to them and getting their input, making changes, etc., and then they turn right around and pull a Pearl Harbor on us. It just goes to show you, you can't trust any of them."

Meanwhile, on the Right

CONSERVATIVES were also protesting Holt Basic Reading. Indianapolis parents faulted the books for excessively using the word *hate*, describing two boys sleeping together, and depicting children lying, disobeying, scheming, and starting a business without their parents' permission. In Minnesota, one group of parents blasted the books as "anti-white" for containing too many minorities; another group condemned one volume for being "anti-parental in many respects," portraying "alien" philosophies, and advancing the march of "Atheistic Humanism in the Schools." In Texas, textbook critics Mel and Norma Gabler criticized the series for slighting phonics, invading students' privacy, encouraging rebellion, and promoting evolution and situational ethics.

Holt editors sometimes acceded to conservative demands. In response to the Indianapolis protest, Barbara Theobald recommended getting rid of *hate* in most places, replacing the story that showed boys sleeping together, and eliminating some depictions of ill-behaved children. But she drew the line at having the children consult their parents before starting a business. This criticism, she declared, represented "an intrusion on an author's or publisher's prerogatives."

Conservative influences were evident elsewhere too. The in-house guidelines urged authors to avoid references to evolution, invasions of students' privacy, and "any subtle propagandizing for Communism." One memo warned that an illustration showing a mixed-race couple "would make some people very nervous." In 1980, Holt even brought in a prominent conservative critic to address the staff: Kris McGough of Columbia, Maryland, a Catholic mother who had testified before Congress, written a monthly column for the journal of the National Council for the Social Studies, and served on Maryland's Values Education Commission.

Still, Holt people had only so much patience for conservative complaints, as reactions to the McGough talk demonstrate. One staff member wrote: "The Kris McGoughs, the John Birch Society, and other such groups do not want children to learn to think independently, to question, to evaluate because such processes threaten their control." Another declared that Holt shouldn't be "intimidated" by Mrs. McGough's "reductionist, simplistic, and reactionary" argument. Still another wondered what possessed people to "feel threatened by a question or an idea in a textbook." The staff never penned such sentiments when liberal critics came calling.

Another Holt staff member vented

his ire when a small Texas newspaper, evidently inspired by the Gablers, published a negative item about a Holt book. "Is this article grounds for a suit for misrepresentation?" a regional sales manager wrote. "It sure as heck cannot do us any good. And I am tired of sitting back and taking it. Maybe CBS could do a news report on the Educational Research Analysts (The Gablers) of Longview, Texas, and expose their true qualifications as educators?" At the time, CBS Inc. owned Holt. (*60 Minutes* did air a feature about the Gablers, but it was relatively innocuous, and it didn't appear until nearly seven years after the memo was written.)

Holt editors viewed Mel Gabler, Kris McGough, and other conservative critics as fundamentally different from Twiss Butler, Jeanette Arakawa, and other liberal critics. In a 1981 speech, Barbara Theobald denounced the conservatives as the sort of "censors" one finds in "totalitarian societies." In the next section of her speech—a section entitled "Positive Pressure Groups"—she said: "At the other end of the spectrum we have other groups . . . who seek to improve our educational institutions and textbooks in a positive manner." At Holt, critics who wanted books to feature more working women were "positive pressure groups"; those who wanted more homemakers were "censors."

Liberals Win Out

THROUGH the revisions, Holt Basic Reading increasingly reflected the views of its liberal critics. One essay in the 1983 edition approvingly described the 1848 Seneca Falls conference, including its declaration that "the history of mankind is the history of repeated injuries and usurpations practiced on the part of man toward woman." Girls or women broke into all-male preserves in such stories as "The Revolt of Mother," "Young Ladies Don't Slay Dragons," and "The Queen Who Wouldn't Make Spice Nuts." (The Holt readers aren't unique; according to a 1987 study, a woman depicted in a basal reader is less likely to be a stay-home mother than to be a spy.)

The Christian bias that the multiculturalists had detected in 1974 was no longer a problem. Paul Vitz, a New York University psychology professor, analyzed the 1983 Holt series for the plaintiffs in the *Mozert* case. Of approximately six hundred stories and poems in the readers, not one depicted Biblical Protestantism. "There are no stories about life in the Bible Belt," Vitz testified at trial, "no stories about churchgoers, families or individuals who pray to God"; indeed, an excerpt of Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House in the Big Woods* omitted a prayer.

In contrast, Vitz found, non-Christian religions received respectful attention. In "Cherry Ann and the Dragon Horse," a Chinese girl prays to a horse idol. Other materials positively depicted Buddhism. Many stories portrayed American Indians, frequently with reference to their religious beliefs. And 18 stories dealt with magic or the occult.

The series also excerpted the theatrical version of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, in which Anne tells her friend, "I wish you had a religion, Peter." "No, thanks! Not me!" he replies. Anne responds: "Oh, I don't mean you have to be Orthodox, or believe in heaven and hell and purgatory and things. I just mean some religion, it doesn't matter what. Just to believe in something!"

"The textbooks picked a very small piece of Anne Frank, and what piece did they pick?" says Marc Stern, a lawyer with the American Jewish Congress. "The piece that said it doesn't matter what religion you have." In Stern's view, "these textbooks aren't neutral."

A New Look at Censorship

THE changes to the Holt series didn't stem from editors' brainstorming in serene isolation. The feminism, multiculturalism, and other approaches took root, as we have seen, largely in response to a subset of outside critics—those from the Left.

At Holt, these liberal activists were seen as sometimes nettlesome, occasionally perplexing, but unceasingly right-thinking. Conservative activists, in contrast, were (in the words of one response to Kris McGough's talk) a "dangerous" and "paranoid minority." Liberals were welcomed into Holt offices. Conservatives were usually kept at a distance; when they were brought in, they were viewed with a mix of wariness and contempt.

As the Holt books veered further leftward, conservatives complained about them more vehemently. Lacking the access of their left-wing counterparts, the right-wing activists had to resort to the political process—where they were vilified as censors.

Here is the point that the annual censorship articles usually overlook. Schoolbook protests most often come from conservatives, not because they are uniquely intolerant of ideas that differ from their own, but because liberals have found a far better way to influence books. While conservatives are noisily lobbying elected officials, liberals are collaborating with textbook editors. In large part, the clamorous, occasionally successful "censors" of the Right are reacting against the hushed, hugely successful "positive pressure groups" of the Left. □

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BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

Profile in Calumny

JACOB COHEN

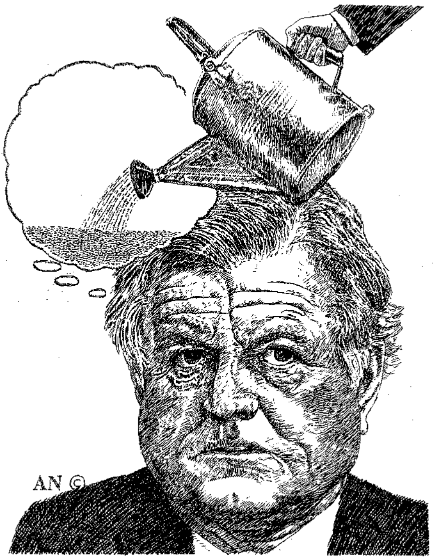
AWARE OF THE fusillade of abuse that has been aimed at this latest book about the Kennedys, I approached it cautiously, hoping, frankly, to find in it some redeeming features, if only out of sympathy for an author who had captured me in the past and now seemed to be the victim of an ambush. Even a thrice-familiar tale, well retold, can be instructive (I was prepared to say).

Alas, the book is simply awful: sinfully second-hand; juvenile, rhetorically and psychologically; grossly overweight; noxious in its invention of purported thoughts and motives; sneaky in its evasions of responsibility for outrageous insinuations; ignorant; and, more than occasionally, ridiculous.

Mr. McGinniss seems to have learned exactly nothing beyond what he has repeated from other people's books and has mislearned some of that. (He doesn't even know, for example, what time President Kennedy was assassinated—it was 12:30, not 12:40.) Much has been made of his unattributed borrowings and his unverifiable embellishments on that material, and indeed one could cite many egregious instances. Copying William Manchester, for instance, he tells the story of Edward Kennedy finding himself without formal trousers just before the President's funeral and needing to wear a pair of his dead brother's pants. Manchester reports that a tailor was hastily called and the pants enlarged until they fit the heftier youngest Kennedy perfectly. McGinniss makes the story his own by guessing, in several painfully padded pages, that while the fit may indeed have been perfect in the physical sense, Edward nonetheless squirmed and fretted during the funeral worrying that his brother's patched-up pants would somehow fail him, or he them. Do you get it? He feared that he couldn't fit into his brother's pants!

The Last Brother, by Joe McGinniss (Simon & Schuster, 626 pp., $25)

But worse than what McGinniss purloins without attribution and inanely embellishes is what he does with attributed gossip and accurately cited conspiracy claims concerning the lives and deaths of the Kennedys. McGinniss's assumption seems to be that if someone has said something ugly or stupid about the Kennedys and you refer to the source, you may repeat it as if it were plainly true. No further judgment, no supportive evidence, no intelligent defense of the item is required.



Alan Nahigian

Thus we are invited to entertain the possibility that Joseph Kennedy sexually molested his daughter Rosemary, shattering her psychologically in the process, and then had her lobotomized and permanently removed to an institution to prevent her from revealing that dangerous intelligence. His wife and his many other children may have known of this primal atrocity and may have become accomplices by remaining silent and by repeating the mendacious cover stories which were created over the years to explain the fate of the missing daughter. (She was finally said to have been hopelessly retarded from birth.) From this incident, says McGinniss, in a typical non-sequitur, the sons learned the dreadful consequence of failure. The evidence McGinniss offers for this ghastly insinuation? Jack's biographer Nigel Hamilton said that someone else said that this might have happened. Joe was a shameless rake who frequently pawed his sons' female companions and therefore may have been capable of raping and lobotomizing his daughter. Don't blame me, blame Hamilton's informants, McGinniss seems to be saying. And as further extenuation: "the documentation that might resolve the question remains sealed to researchers." The motto here and throughout the book is: If you can't know what you are talking about, talk about it.

In McGinniss's telling, Kennedy *père* is the "unforgivably immoral" first cause of all Kennedy effects. Even eight-year-old Teddy's pneumonia, in the fall of 1940, he says, "might" have been caused by a weakening of his immune system by news of his father's latest public disgrace. The sons imitated Joe sexually and psychologically, protected his notorious reputation, and one another's, from constantly looming scandal, obeyed his commands, made good on his outlandish promises, and in every manner tried to enact his limitless ambitions for them.

Crucially, when Jack needed a primary victory in West Virginia during the 1960 campaign, Joe approached old associates in the Mob, specifically Sam Giancana, who, according to McGinniss, was signally responsible for that victory and perhaps for the narrow triumph in the presidential election as well. In return, Joe may very well have promised the Mob that the new President would rid Cuba of Castro, enabling them to return to

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Mr. Cohen is chairman of the Department of American Studies at Brandeis University. His essay "Yes, Oswald Was the Lone Assassin" will appear in the forthcoming Best Essays of 1992 *(Ticknor).*

that highly profitable venue. Or, at least they may have thought that he promised that, McGinniss confidently asserts. As a result, Jack, true to his father's promise, or, rather, true to the Mob's possible understanding of such a promise, eagerly embraced the disastrous assault at the Bay of Pigs in 1961, recklessly and needlessly brought the world to the brink of nuclear disaster during the missile crisis in 1962, and plotted with the Mafia to assassinate Castro. (McGinniss seems ignorant of the fact that it was the Eisenhower Administration that first approached the Mafia in this regard.) Anyone who thinks these events had something to do with the context of the Cold War, be disabused; we learn from this book that they were a payoff to the Mob pure and simple.

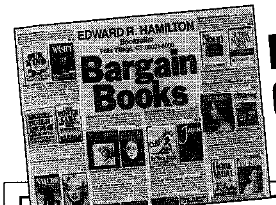
President Kennedy had a long and reckless affair with Judith Campbell, who was also sleeping with Sam Giancana at the time. The affair with Miss Campbell, who transmitted packages of what may have been money from Jack to Sam, gave the Mob further purchase on his policies, for he was, like his father, in this and many other matters, ripe for blackmail.

Enter now the figure of Joe's old friend J. Edgar Hoover, notorious racist and blackmailer. McGinniss repeats the familiar gossip that Hoover controlled all the Kennedys with the filth he had amassed about them. (And adds the familiar gossip that the Mob controlled Hoover with their knowledge that he was a secret homosexual.) Fearing revelations, Joe promised Hoover his job as head of the FBI in perpetuity, and also that Jack would do nothing to abet the civil-rights movement. Again, loyal to his father's promises, and fearing the revelations that Hoover was always on the verge of leaking, Jack and Bobby, his attorney general, did everything they could to frustrate the goals of the black demonstrators.

Apart from its ridiculously truncated explanation for major events in American foreign and domestic history, these arguments suffer from obvious contradictions which McGinniss blithely ignores. If Joe had such influence on his sons, why did Bobby fanatically pursue and harass the Mob, and Giancana in particular—presumably with Jack's permission—long after his father's promises and his brother's affair with Giancana's mistress? And why did President Kennedy, with the advice of his attorney general, introduce the monumental civil-rights bill of 1963, risking Hoover's vengeance? And if the Mob was so powerfully efficient, capable of arranging landslide primary victories by last-second interventions, why couldn't it assassinate Castro?

McGinniss simply stipulates that the Mob arranged to have the President killed because they were irritated by his failures in Cuba (which were partly their own) and infuriated by Bobby's relentless campaign against them. How they connected with Oswald, an inexperienced gunman, who, in my studied view, single-handedly shot the President, with a faulty rifle, from a building in which he had been working since before the presidential route in Dallas was chosen (by Kenneth O'Donnell, the President's friend), he does not deign to say. But the point, to McGinniss, is that Bobby must have felt responsible for his brother's death, and Teddy must have learned of his next older brother's complicity in his oldest living brother's assassination. True to their tribal habits, the two covered up their knowledge of the President's real assassins (and, in this reading, they include Bobby) and were further corrupted by their retroactive complicity in not revealing what they knew. They accepted the conclusions of the Warren Commission without reading its report, fearing that a real investigation would reveal what only McGinniss and now the entire world know about the sins of the Kennedys.

Actually, Bobby had even more to be guilty about before he too was assassinated by "them." According to McGinniss, the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. was caused by the "climate" that was created by J. Edgar Hoover's secret pursuit of King. (Typically, McGinniss does not feel the need to explain how Hoover's secret campaign against King could have influenced James Earl Ray, his assassin, who did not know that secret.) Since Bobby obediently and fearfully coddled Hoover, he therefore must have felt personally responsible for King's death as well as his brother's. His latter-day liberalism can be explained by sublimated guilt. You probably never knew all these amazing things, but Teddy did, and was kept from finding his true "identity" by the burden of



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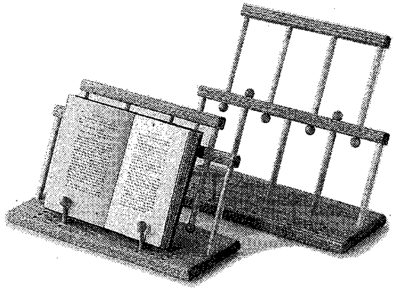

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knowing these and many other secrets in the history of this vicious, pathological family.

Indeed, this purported treatment of Edward, the last brother, has really very little to say about him except, over and over again, that he suffered monumentally from having to observe, comply with, cover up, and somehow continue the traditions of his vicious, guilt-drenched clan. His many falls and humiliations since the Sixties may be seen as pathological forms of rebellion against his fate.

If this noxious book had not been announced with such fanfare, and commanded such an enormous price; if it had not been written by such a celebrated author, it probably would not have received the pummeling it has. Nonetheless, it is getting what it deserves. □

Enemy of the Arts

JACOB NEUSNER

Leaving Town Alive: Confessions of an Arts Warrior, by John Frohnmayer (Houghton Mifflin, 360 pp., $22.95)

IN THE long history of how Washington calls to national service both wise men and fools, the accident of political circumstance leaving the Republic in the hands of sheer chance, rarely have we lost more at the toss of the political dice than in the spring of 1989, when, in the midst of a protracted crisis, John Frohnmayer took over as chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. He was the wrong man, at the wrong time, in the wrong place. Over the next two and a half years many Americans came to question whether this country should spend tax money on the arts at all. And Mr. Frohnmayer was the reason.

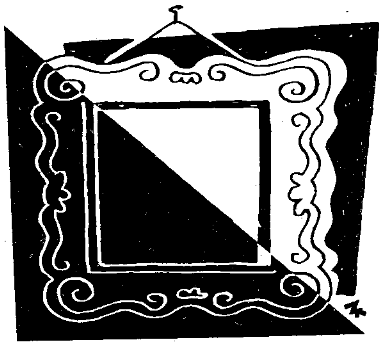
Frohnmayer came to Washington in the midst of the crisis precipitated by the Endowment's funding of the infamous *Piss Christ*, a work of art consisting of a calculatedly offensive title, a bottle of urine, and a plastic statue of Jesus. And word had just gotten out that the NEA had a hand in the exhibit of Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs, including pictures no newspaper or magazine of general circulation was prepared to reprint.

In his first days as chairman, Frohnmayer turned a crisis into a catastrophe. What he did was simple. The National Council of the Arts, on which I served, had recommended we not fund a New York City project, "Artists Space," that did not strike us as a good use for public funds. The NEA chairman accepted our recommendation. Then the applicant persuaded him to make a trip to New York to see the exhibit.

He went. He saw. He thought it was pretty good. He didn't know much about art, but he knew what he liked. And so he reversed himself. And all hell broke loose.

No one can point to another case in which an Endowment chairman selected one rejected application among many, paid a personal call on the applicant, took a guided tour of the project, then reversed himself. When you run a federal agency that receives tens of thousands of applications annually—and of necessity has to reject most of them—you simply cannot play Lady Bountiful on a retail scale.

Some of us asked Frohnmayer whether he was prepared to re-examine all rejected applications and decide what he thought of each one. We wondered whether he realized the precedent he was setting—swooping down from on high, to show favor to one applicant among hundreds. Some asked about fairness and due process. And a few even then foresaw the coming disaster.



How did the Frohnmayer fiasco come about? Paying off a political debt, President Bush stood by his choice for nearly three dreadful years even at the cost of his own credibility. Frohnmayer was fired two and a half years into his botched assignment; in fact, he ought never to have been appointed. Pat Buchanan did a great public service by making himself a major threat to the Bush Presidency and turning Frohnmayer into a principal source of opprobrium.

But Buchanan gets only part of the credit. In this self-serving, mean-spirited account, Frohnmayer gives himself the lion's share. He shows in his own words exactly what went wrong. Bush appointed a liberal Democrat and got what he deserved.

Frohnmayer's defense in fact forms a scathing indictment of his year at the NEA, one far more devastating than any critic could have fabricated. Now that he tells us what he was thinking, he proves that when we on the Council distrusted our own suspicions, thinking they must be wildly exaggerated, we were wrong. Our suspicions were, if any thing, understated. For Frohnmayer not only ran the Endowment into the ground, he did so willfully and knowingly. He substituted self-righteousness for wisdom, and turned reprisal into public policy.

He writes his own epitaph: "I leave with the belief that this eclipse of the soul will soon pass and with it the lunacy that sees artists as enemies and ideas as demons." From these words, you would hardly imagine that this man's critics on the Arts Council included brilliant musicians of exquisite taste, such as Sam Lipman; essayists of elegance and wit, such as Joseph Epstein; long-time and generous patrons of the arts, such as Phyllis Birney—not to mention members of Congress, right, center, and left. Everybody wondered why this man insisted on labeling his opponents "enemies of the arts," when all they did was point out his bungling.

His critics indicted a bad administrator, an unreliable politician, and a self-glorifying partisan of a tiny fringe

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Mr. Neusner is Distinguished Research Professor of Religious Studies at the University of South Florida, Tampa, and served on the National Council of the Arts from 1984 to 1990. He is the author of A Rabbi Talks with Jesus *(Doubleday) and other books.*

of the arts avant garde. We weren't lunatics, and he was no victim of any "eclipse of the soul." We cared about an Endowment that served a broad national consensus and so would endure for generations to come, and we respected the righteous indignation of people Frohnmayer held in contempt, for instance, "fundamentalist proponents of traditional values."

I doubt that many people will enjoy reading this book as much as Frohnmayer obviously enjoyed writing it. Stylistic infelicities make the reading something of a trial. The book is heavily padded and boring, and the prose hardly a tribute to the artistry of a man who wants to establish his arts credentials. Here is how he conceives artful prose:

> The problem was that Neusner was right: precious little information was available on which to decide. But that had seldom stopped the council in the past, and to defer these grants simply upped the ante, in terms of both their visibility and the ultimate difficulty of making the decision. Now I was screwed.

Another gem among many: "The White House usually followed the seagull theory of management: fly in, squawk and flap and s---, and fly away." And so the book runs on for hundreds of pages of lifeless, wordy, tasteless verbal garbage. Where were the editors of Houghton Mifflin the day this book crossed their desks?

Still, anyone interested in a sordid chapter in public policy in the arts will value the document. Frohnmayer tells us much about himself, his opinions, how his golf game went the day he decided to campaign for the NEA chairmanship, and on and on and on. In every case in which Frohnmayer treats an incident in which I was involved, I found his account, if often self-serving, still completely accurate. Reading the book reminded me of how reluctantly many of us reached the conclusion that this likable, but unreliable and disingenuous, man was a calamity for the agency—and the arts.

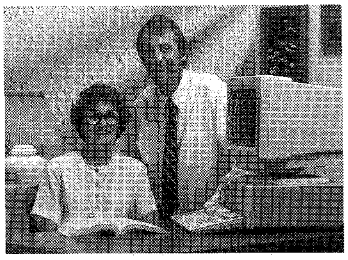
Frohnmayer believes not only in giving the facts, but in giving his prejudices the weight of facts, too. His critics were not, in fact, his enemies; they possessed the same rationality and commitment to public support of certain aspects of the arts that he did. Consigning them to the loony-bin, he marks himself as a partisan extremist, not the reasonable negotiator he thinks himself to be.

Frohnmayer systematically misrepresents the other side. In the earliest pages, he tells of a letter that expressed disgust at "a 'picture of Christ' submerged in a jar of urine. 'This type of art would be repulsive no matter who was in the bottle,' she wrote. Leah and I laughed. . . . But the hostility of some religious people toward art was disquieting." Thus, in the opening hours of his administration, Frohnmayer committed a fundamental error. The correspondent did not express "hostility . . . toward art"; she complained at the use of public funds for anti-Christian propaganda. Throughout his chairmanship, Frohnmayer persistently maintained that he defended "art," when his critics spoke not about art but solely about appropriate uses of public funds.

When some of us asked for guidelines that would move the Endowment closer to policies on which common consent could be attained—Congress was begging us to do just that—Frohnmayer leapt to the barricades as "defender of the arts," not to mention free speech, the First Amendment, and the good, the true, and the beautiful. He had been fallen into the habit, during his own career as a practicing lawyer, of identifying his opinions (whether purchased by clients or freely given) with truth, and the other side's views with "lunacy."

But the charge does not stick. In these pages, an unconscious parody gives the game away. Frohnmayer recalls meeting with Congressman Dick Armey, certainly the best of the handful of first-class intellects in public life today: "He belched forth invective . . ."—now, really, "belched forth"? "What I found . . . was that the Democrats typically played straight with me. It was some of the Republicans who were devious, self-serving, and hostile." Funny, that's what we thought of Frohnmayer.

How George Bush could have appointed a man who says he did not vote for him in 1988 because "I simply couldn't bring myself to vote for a ticket that included Dan Quayle" begs a tougher question: Why did Frohnmayer accept appointment in the Administration of a President he never supported? He himself says, "The President had no agenda." That's exactly what the people who voted for



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Buchanan thought. But they didn't take jobs in the Bush Administration.

Frohnmayer, however, not only took the job, he actively campaigned for it. And once he got the appointment, he resolved to say whatever Congress wanted to hear to gain confirmation. He describes his statement to Congress on obscenity: "after the obligatory statement that I opposed obscenity . . ." He assured Congress that he would not fund pornography or controversial work: "I was dispensing [assurances] like a vending machine."

But like many cynics, he was also naïf: "Only when I arrived in Washington did I learn that, at least in the eyes of Presidential Personnel, I did not have authority to hire anyone without first getting political clearance." His earliest appointments were Democrats. Later on he concedes: "Everything in Washington is political. I was a political appointee and reported to the President." Frohnmayer came a bit late to that discovery—or else he knew the rules but thought he could get around them.

And, like other innocents, he plays fast and loose with his unproven suspicions. Al Felzenberg, a first-class administrator, came on board to help run the agency and got fired within weeks. Frohnmayer does not even bother to justify his ruthlessness: "I always suspected (but could not prove) that he was in continual communication with the White House and that the orders he was taking were the Administration's, not mine." So much for due process.

At the end he quotes the blessing I gave him when he started the job (which I swiped from a page of the Talmud): "May you enjoy the last day as much as you did the first day, and may you go out as clean and beautiful as you have come in." I got things wrong. It was the Arts Endowment that needed the blessing. ☐

The Student Guerrilla's Guide

PETER SHAW

THE chances of finding out what kind of education any particular college supplies—by studying its catalogues or promotional videos, by taking a guided tour, or by consulting a standard college guide—are about as good as the CIA's chances of estimating the size of the Soviet economy were when it attempted to do so by studying its published statistics. In both cases the institution in question is one with much to hide. Colleges, for their part, wish to keep secret that they no longer take responsibility for exposing students to the thought and achievements of the past.

The National Review College Guide gets this bad news out. It also identifies those few still operative sectors of the dying system it reports on—colleges that are the equivalents of the Soviets' caviar, sable, and vodka industries. This second edition of the *Guide* identifies 58 mostly small colleges (up from 50 in its first edition) that still offer respectable programs. The usual enrollment and other statistics for these schools are given, but the joint authors are no mere compilers. Brad Miner is a former literary editor of NATIONAL REVIEW, and Charles Sykes is the author of the college exposés *Profscam* and *The Hollow Men* (Regnery Gateway).

For each of the colleges they find worthy these authors provide what Herman Melville called "an inside narrative"—not just the external facts but also the intellectual, social, and moral dynamics of the place. As they move from school to school, furthermore, Miner and Sykes develop a profile of American higher education that can take its place next to Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*, Roger Kimball's *Tenured Radicals*, and Dinesh D'Souza's *Illiberal Education*: a guide to understanding and surviving college in the 1990s.

The National Review College Guide: America's Top Liberal Arts Schools, edited by Charles J. Sykes and Brad Miner, introduction by William F. Buckley Jr. (Simon & Schuster, 270 pp., $13)

The preface makes clear how little fundamental knowledge college students are any longer required to master. The authors argue persuasively that a broad liberal-arts education rather than early specialization is the best preparation for most careers, and they set forth their major criterion for judging a college: whether or not it has a required core curriculum designed to foster broad liberal learning. They truly mean it when they say "liberal," which can include political liberalism. For though both authors are conservatives, they put a solid curriculum ahead of everything else.

Hence they recommend the school that first introduced the core curriculum, Columbia, even though much of its staff stands firmly on the Left. (But they also speculate on whether Columbia will have to be dropped from the Third Edition.) Nor do they hesitate to recommend other schools with politically liberal faculties but solid core programs: Notre Dame, William & Mary, Gustavus Adolphus, Providence, Washington and Lee, and Trinity (Texas). They even advise: "You should not pass up the chance to study with *any* great teacher, even if he is a Marxist."

Just how many Marxist teachers are around these days becomes evident from the two features at the back of the *Guide*. Readers not familiar with the college scene should start with the first of these, "The Academic Gulag," which gives withering descriptions of the nation's dozen most prestigious and politicized colleges. These are unsparingly exposed for their stifling political correctness, fatuous permissiveness, and faddish absurdities like Amherst's "Sport and Society," with its self-described "Marxist and neo-Marxist interpretations of sport." The other gulag academies are Berkeley, Brown, Dartmouth, Duke, Harvard, Michigan, Penn, Smith, Stanford, Wesleyan, and Yale.

The second section to study is "A Guerrilla Guide to the Liberal Arts." Miner and Sykes are aware that some families will find many of the schools they recommend either too geographically remote, too small, too religious, or too restrictive (no tea or coffee allowed at Brigham Young). Or else parents may be willing to have their child suffer the outrages of political correctness in exchange for useful social connections. (In his introduction to the *Guide*, though, William Buckley points out that "meeting more [future

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Mr. Shaw is finishing a new book, Recovering American Literature.

corporation presidents" is "very much less predictable than it was back when the college population was a tenth of what it is now.") The "Guerrilla Guide" outlines the steps an entering freshman at a prestigious but ideologically infected school can take to find people capable of helping him get a decent education.

The ruling principle here and everywhere else is the conviction that a college's tradition counts for something. Even if a college's liberal faculty is bent on politicizing instruction, a long tradition—such as that provided by a foundation on religious principles, a lingering socially conservative atmosphere, or even a location in a conservative part of the country—can preserve essential values. On the other hand these same values, as the *Guide* illustrates in detail, are virtually everywhere being eroded, at different speeds and in varying patterns, in particular academic departments, and by particular professors. This means that the *Guide*'s guidelines cannot invariably be relied on when it comes to a particular course or individual professor. A core curriculum can be firmly in place, for example, but still be taught in a distorted way.

Once the ideological winds start to blow in a college, the features recommended by the *Guide*—core curriculum, small classes, teaching by professors instead of graduate assistants—shrink in importance. In my opinion, they can be less important in the first place, as the *Guide* sometimes acknowledges, than such factors as a long tradition of civility in an institution. The *Guide* sensibly endorses some schools that do not meet all of its criteria but that retain a sufficient residue of conservative values.

One way out of the dilemma of choosing a school that could prove to have been politicized by the time the applicant arrives there is to apply the skills provided by the guerrilla guide at schools not mentioned in the *Guide*. One could, for example, choose a large, prestigious school located near other colleges and participating in an agreement with them to let students take one another's courses. In such a cluster of schools it may be easier to find one good English or history or psychology department. Or if not a whole department, then at least one leftover unpoliticized professor. Good luck in your search. You'll find, I think, that the best school with the best instructors and the best courses is the Second Edition of *The National Review College Guide*. ☐

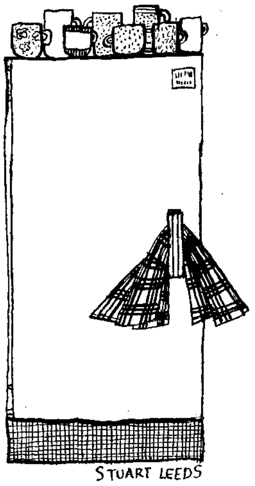
The Family, R I P?

RICHARD VIGILANTE

THE good, albeit old, news is that Allan Carlson knows more and understands more about the decline of the American family than just about anyone else writing today. The bad news is that he has just about given up hope.

Carlson's starting point is unusual for American family-watchers—not the 1950s but the eighteenth century. The United States, he starts by telling us, was founded not as a commercial republic but "as a pre-modern nation" of mostly self-sufficient households in which "residence and workplace were one and the same" and the family's economic life was inseparable from its social and moral life.

From Cottage to Work Station: The Family's Search for Social Harmony in the Industrial Age, by Allan Carlson (Ignatius, 181 pp., $12.95)



As a result industrialization was as traumatic here as in Europe, separating home from work, undermining the autonomous family, and thus rupturing the original conception of American life. The damage to the family was almost immediately apparent and has been one of the central themes of American politics ever since.

In other words, the current crisis of the American family is at least 150 years old, and we have a long track record of trying to deal with it. Carlson spends most of the rest of the book looking at the record and comes away discouraged. He focuses especially on five historical pro-family strategies or hopes:

The "family wage experiment" attempted to preserve the traditional family by limiting to one—the father—the number of members who had to work outside the home. If employers would pay fathers enough to support a family, and society discourage married women and children (and even singles) from competing for such jobs, then mother, free to stay home, could build the private life.

Despite some successes, the experiment failed: government intervention in support of family wages almost always backfired, producing unintended results. Private initiatives were much more successful but reached their peak just as we entered World War II, when the need for women factory workers destroyed the cultural consensus on which it rested.

Next, the "suburban strategy" tried to give the evolving non-economic "companionate" family a secure footing in home ownership, restoring at least the psychological if not the economic autonomy of Jefferson's small freeholder. Carlson shows, however, how pro-family government initiatives, including tax incentives for home-ownership, backfired, favoring two-income latch-key or daycare families over the poorer traditional one-income families. And suburbia made many housewives unhappy.

"The religious possibility"—that belief in family values might triumph over economic interest—always a long shot, succumbed in the late 1960s to economic pressures (i.e., the growing need for two incomes to pay taxes and compete in an inflated housing market) and the crisis in belief. The "cold-war family"—the possibility that nearly universal male military service and a large, standing army might bolster the family—dissolved as recruiting pressures turned generals into feminists. And the "professional temp-

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Mr. Vigilante is editorial director of the Center for Social Thought. His book, The Strike: The Daily News War and the Future of American Labor, *is forthcoming from Simon & Schuster.*

tation"—the hope that the status of housewives' work might be raised by a new science of "home economics"—came to nought when the women who invented and ran the new science—rarely homemakers themselves—enthusiastically accepted the feminists' invitation to change sides.

Carlson's often ingenious analysis ends in a gloomy vision of families forever losing a two-front war. Capitalism undermines them unless positively prevented from doing so. And while pro-family forces may occasionally win skirmishes on the economic front, they can be outflanked at any time by the family's ideological enemies, who are succored, even created, by the modern economy.

Nor can traditionalists rely on the government for positive help, because modern government in its hunger for isolated, needy "clients" has an "interest in the decomposition of the family into its constituent parts." Thus "societywide renewal" is unlikely.

What Carlson misses, I think, is what most pessimists miss. The current struggle is mostly a game of percentages, and one in which family traditionalists hold an immense advantage: Even today, most Americans are inclined to build more or less traditional families whenever they are not prevented from doing so, by economic necessity or social intimidation.

It is true that the forces aligned against them are very powerful. But imagine how a few eminently possible victories might change things.

Suppose we returned to 1950s tax rates on families, effectively removing most moderate-income families with children from the federal tax rolls. By that action alone we would permit a substantial percentage of mothers to return home.

Suppose we got a voucher system for schools nationwide. Schools would stop being *automatically* a propaganda vehicle for anti-family forces, and a hefty percentage might end up traditionalist and religious.

Suppose, finally, that conservatives saw in the collapse of American unions an opportunity to build a post-industrial labor movement that effectively recreates a family wage and restores the blue-collar middle class, a traditionalist bastion.

These actions alone might make it possible for most American families to live out the industrial–traditionalist compromise—one primary breadwinner, a reasonably full private life at home, religion restored to the fabric of everyday life—tipping the balance toward the "societywide renewal" of which Carlson despairs. □

FILM

The Truth Is in the Details

JOHN SIMON

WOODY ALLEN'S latest, ***Manhattan Murder Mystery***, was made under crisis conditions; intended for Mia Farrow, it was hastily readjusted for Diane Keaton. One could make excuses, but an artist such as Allen fancies himself to be doesn't accept special pleading. Life is always difficult; making a movie is not a burden, but a respite.

If ever a picture seemed improvised, slapped together, disrespectful of the demands of the medium, this is it. Written by Allen with his off-and-on collaborator Marshall Brickman, it concerns a nice, civilized Manhattan couple who become involved with their immediate neighbors, the Houses. When Mrs. House dies the very next day, Carol Lipton (Diane Keaton) considers the circumstances suspicious, and decides to play Nancy Drew. Her husband, Larry (Allen), disagrees, and urges her to mind her business. Soon she is coming upon disturbing details, and eventually even the skeptical Larry joins in the sleuthing.

What a mystery—particularly a low-key, this-could-happen-to-anyone kind—needs is verisimilitude. Since neither the commission of the crime nor its unraveling involves masterstrokes of cerebration, it behooves the script to draw us in through sheer believability. But Allen and Brickman are trying for something else as well: comedy. So we get that occasionally effective hybrid, the comedy–mystery. In that case, however, the comedy had better be funny. What happens if the thriller aspect doesn't thrill very much, and the comedy doesn't get many laughs? This.

To start with the verisimilitude. Coming home one evening to their apartment house, the Liptons are enticed to the House apartment down the hall. The couples have just met, and Mr. House, who is a bit of a bore, is dying to show off his fabulous stamp collection; though pleased to make new friends, Larry is fuming because this is making him miss the Bob Hope movie on television that he was dying to watch. I ask you now, is there any with-it New York couple such as the Liptons without a VCR? Well, maybe they just forget to set it. No problem: Larry can excuse himself for one minute, set the machine, and come back. Even the most rabid philatelist would brook such a piddling interruption.

Again, Carol gets hold of the House apartment keys in a way that even for New York's shoddily run buildings strains all credulity. Snooping around the House apartment, she is surprised by the widower's unexpected return; hiding under a bed, she escapes detection. But she loses her glasses there, and House finds them, later, under his bed. Now, a person needing her glasses to see is not going to lose them, of all places, under a potential murderer's bed. If her needy eyesight doesn't clue her in, surely her instinct of self-preservation will. But as if this weren't preposterous enough, House swallows Carol's pathetic explanation, and overlooks even her and Larry's frantic behavior while they're cooking up their indigestible lies.

And so it goes, from absurdity to absurdity. One more sample: sitting in an alcove at a wine tasting, Carol glances out a window and sees on a rapidly passing bus the supposedly dead Mrs. House. Even assuming that one's perception is not blunted by the critical tippling, can one spot a person one has met only once before as she rides a passing bus? To say nothing of coincidence, which in this film is stretched to dimensions that would have given Thomas Hardy pause. The slovenliness and cynicism in scene after scene knows no limits or shame. There is even an all-night garbage-disposal plant somewhere in New York, ablaze like Vulcan's workshop, where anyone can come and dump cadavers

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Mr. Simon is NR'*s film critic.*

undetected, for there is no human being of any kind around.

Okay, so this is more of a comedy. What kind of comedy? Mostly marital spats of the Liptons, as she snoops and he grouses. This yields those querulous, high-pitched, whiny Allen natterings that I find funny only in the small doses in which they don't come. In a *New York Times* Sunday piece, Maureen Dowd quotes two raisins from this soggy cake right in her second paragraph. In one, Larry tells Carol that she is acting crazy, and that she should save something for menopause. In the other, he avers there is nothing wrong with her that "a little Prozac and a polo mallet wouldn't cure." Since Miss Dowd has divulged them, I feel free to repeat them, but there go half the funny lines the film has to offer.

Visual excitement has never been Allen's strong suit, and it isn't here either. The final confused shootout occurs backstage in a movie theater showing the closing scene of Welles's *The Lady from Shanghai*, which is a shootout in a mirrored funhouse. Now, if there were some sort of twist here, if this weren't just a disoriented reckoning within another disoriented reckoning, it might be fun. A drunken orgy against a drunken-orgy background is nothing; a Boy Scout jamboree so framed is something.

Only Allen and Miss Keaton get much of a chance to act. Alan Alda is brought in as a possible extracurricular love interest for Carol; Anjelica Huston, ditto, for Larry. But both these plot elements are promptly swept into a corner and forgotten. Similarly, a college-age son is dragged in for one brief scene, only to vanish forthwith. Miss Keaton would be all right for her part if she were willing to settle for clothes and a hairstyle befitting her weight and age. As for Allen, although he is quite amusing getting hysterical in a stalled elevator, the rest of the time he is hard to watch, especially as a love object for two women. He has the face of a middle-aged imp, a too-rumpled Rumpelstiltskin—a nerdy, over-age gnome impossible to warm to. There is amusing ugliness: think of Groucho Mark, of Buster Keaton. And there is the other kind: this.

■ Claude Chabrol hasn't been heard from much lately. Now he is back with ***Betty***, based on a Georges Simenon novel. Betty, an attractive, 28-year-old, obviously affluent woman, sporting a strange look—is it hostile, preoccupied, weirdly detached, downright crazy?—finds herself, drunk on a terribly rainy night, in a homey bar in Versailles, where a kindly-seeming doctor has brought her for dinner. Yes, it was a pick-up in a Paris bar, and there is something odd about driving all the way to Versailles in a downpour to a place that offers only one main course. But Betty seems to need protection, and who better to give it than a respectable-looking, fatherly physician?

Sitting there in the warm, familial Hole (*Le Trou*), as the hangout sheltering all kinds of misfits is called, the doctor suddenly starts talking weirdly, and is about to do something very, very queer. The way the mood imperceptibly changes from the mundane to the bizarre, the precise manner in which the nightmarish infiltrates the commonplace, immediately proclaims the master, or masters: Simenon the novelist, and Chabrol the screenwriter-director. What in Woody Allen's film would have appeared preposterous, here seems only too easily and dreadfully believable.

A middle-aged *habituée* of the Hole, Laure, comes to Betty's rescue. She and the proprietor (who, it turns out, is her lover) get the by now quite drunk young woman out of the doctor's clutches, and Laure takes her to her suite at the posh Trianon Palace in Versailles, where she has been living for the last three years since her husband's death. She has one special thing in common with Betty: they both like to hit the bottle. Next morning, the two women start to communicate, even though Betty is extraordinarily vague or taciturn about certain things. It does emerge, though, that she has "sold her children."

What does this mean? It means that she loved but never intended to marry Guy, her rich young husband from a suffocatingly bourgeois family, in which Guy's mother, Mme Etamble, rules the terribly proper, terribly constricting roost. Whether such a soft-spoken, despotic matriarch can still thrive in Paris (Simenon wrote this some thirty years ago) I doubt, but the director makes you believe it by his sheer command of detail. Chabrol knows what artists know (and Woody Allen doesn't): if the tiny things ring true, the hard-to-credit big ones will sound no alarms.

Take the scene where Betty, having been caught in adultery within earshot of her children, is made to sign a contract whereby, in exchange for never seeing her two little girls again, she will be provided with a decent living for the rest of her life. In full family gathering, a lawyer dictates and she

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write: "I, Elisabeth Etamble . . ." etc. etc. By force of habit, Betty writes "I, Betty." When the lawyer finally notices this, he takes the paper and slowly, deliberately, almost artfully, tears it into two strips (not four or eight pieces), and lets them float onto the tabletop. It is the quiet elegance with which he does it that breaks your heart.

After she has signed, and is about to leave this house, these lives forever, Betty approaches the door behind which her girls are sleeping to kiss them goodnight and goodbye. The very nice but mother-ruled Guy tells her no, this is out of the question. What gets to you is the sweetly reasonable way he says it (his heart isn't really in it): it's late, they are already asleep, what's the point? His considerate tone, as if he were merely correcting a slight lapse in grammar, gives you cold shivers. As does the docile expression with which, after a slight hesitation, Betty walks on—like a naughty, semi-contrite child being sent to bed without her dinner.

But the final wonder of the film is the personality of Betty, who is not just the victim she seems to be, but also a victimizer. There is something spectrally affectless about her as she goes around not connecting with people, repaying good with evil, being a pathological case. As Marie Trintignant superbly plays her, she is an unforgettably disturbing character, walking in a cloud of otherwhereness, yet somehow knowing, in that sleepwalkerish way of hers, where to stick in the knife. As Laure, Stéphane Audran is equally fine, and the rest are not far behind. Understated and aristocratically poised (and with minimal background music), *Betty* is one of the most well-behavedly bone-chilling horror stories of all time. □

TELEVISION

I Am Curious, Blue

MATTHEW SCULLY

ABOUT the best entertainment to be had from television nowadays is hearing producers and actors try to palm off their various brands of vulgarity *vérité* as serious stuff, "daring" and "controversial" in its cultural implications.

The big talk now centers on ***N.Y.P.D. Blue***, premiering September 21, in which ABC has dared to take on an R rating. This is necessary, explains producer Steven Bochco, because with so much slash and skin on the cable stations the networks must produce shows "a little more reflective of our society. . . . I'm not saying that language and nudity are a substitute for substance," he reflects. "I *am* saying that, as an artist with a palette, those colors, judiciously used, can add greatly to the finished product."

Hearing this, you might take Mr. Bochco for a struggling artist pleading the subtle realism of his work—instead of a millionaire TV executive serving up yet another cop drama, whose most novel artistic stroke is an exposed behind. This "unique blend of realism and smoldering situations," as ABC describes it, is meant—inevitably—to "shock" us, to force us to face the "realities" in which we live. And so it does, as viewers confront head on the reality of Hollywood's moral vision.

In Mr. Bochco's case this is a little surprising because, although his last major contribution to Western civilization was *Doogie Howser, MD*, he was also the creator of the thoughtful *Hill Street Blues*. The latter, particularly at the beginning of its six-year run, actually did approach reality. There were frustrated police officers watching career criminals strut free from court; snippy lawyeresses lecturing the chief on constitutional liberties; and in one episode the moral awakening of a public defender after her friend was raped by a victim of society released on some technicality. The whole atmosphere of the show, starting with the somber theme music, bore some resemblance to what police work must really be like in an ill-governed, crime-infested city.

With *N.Y.P.D. Blue*, we're in triter terrain: hard-bitten detectives contending with greasy, raspy-voiced Mob kingpins; anguished friction between police partners, who deep down have a soft spot for each other; implausibly fetching lady cops; passionate intra-precinct affairs; and marriages strained by the demands of a cop's lonely job. These, and the "smoldering" sex scenes, are the daring new colors in which Mr. Bochco executes his vision. Even the old black-and-white version of *N.Y.P.D.* with Jack Warden was in its unpretentious way more true to life. Nor does the camera technique—jumping about awkwardly, to give the feel of an on-the-scene hand cam—quite do the trick; if anything, this affectation only distracts us from the rather hard work of discerning a believable story line.

The partners on whom the drama centers are Detectives John Kelly and Andy Sipowicz—overplayed by David Caruso and Dennis Franz, both of the *Hill Street* cast. Sipowicz is on the edge. His divorce papers just came through, he's been drinking too much, the routine is wearing on him, and he just beat up a fat guy in the Mob who is now gunning for him. A further sign of his deterioration comes in the opening scene, in a confrontation with a female attorney who uses the phrase "ipso facto." "Hey," he replies, grabbing his crotch, "ipso facto this, you . . . ." We are plainly in the presence of "controversy."

In his despair Sipowicz heads down to the nearest bar, where he meets a prostitute. The next scene, their tryst, is interrupted when suddenly Fatso, the humiliated mobster, enters from the bathroom. It's a set-up! Prostitute flees, apologizing for her betrayal; mobster shoots Sipowicz.

The balance of the show follows Detective Kelly as he takes on the Mob in search of the guy who shot his buddy, while Sipowicz struggles for his life in a hospital. Perhaps it's Kelly's zeal for justice that briefly rekindles the affections of *his* estranged wife, Laura (Sherry Springfield, the only one here who conveys any kind of emotional nuance), another torn, career-minded lawyeress whom he beds down one last time before their separation is official. Poor Laura, though, shows up at his apartment the next day to commiserate, only to find him abed with patrolwoman Janice Licalsi—who, we discover at the end, is in the pay of the Mob. Kelly, as the episode ends with

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Mr. Scully is a former NR *associate literary editor and speechwriter for Vice President Quayle.*

this suspenseful twist, doesn't know it yet, so that in episode two we may eagerly await yet another bloody bedroom set-up.

To Janice—the third party in this triangle, played by Amy Brenneman—falls the opportunity to lead us past a cultural milestone: that moment when her finely cleft fanny debuts on the small screen, studied from various angles for a full 15 seconds. We must remember her and Mr. Bochco 10 or 15 years from now when such scenes are commonplace, when we are as advanced as the Dutch, French, and Italians, and every soap commercial stars a naked babe.

Meanwhile, do not get too attached to Amy, who one suspects will soon have to showcase her gift elsewhere. The one hard reality that TV executives are not prepared to confront is that the American public by and large still prefers the wholesome to the salacious, which is why ratings are down over at the cable channels that ABC now seeks to emulate. To fault the network for pandering is to give them too much credit. If anything they are perverse altruists, delivering not what the public wants but what we *need* if America is to match Hollywood's honesty.

And of course, controversy distracts. It's much easier to defend oneself against charges of being "daring" or "shocking" than of simply being routine and mediocre. □

SOUND ON DISC

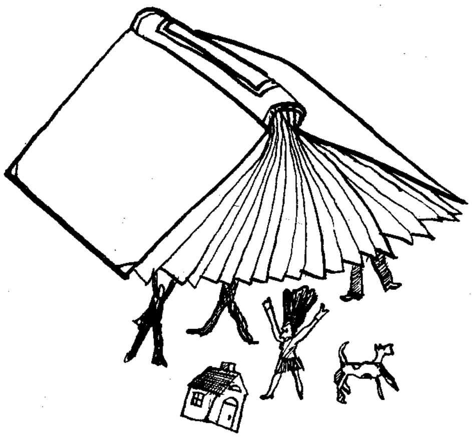
Music's Sixes & Sevens

RALPH ROBERT TOLEDANO

NOW that Lady Hillary has taken to discoursing on the meaning of meaning, are critics empowered to write on the meaning of music? Composers have said us nay for many years, and I delight in two expressions of their disdain. The great musical ironist Erik Satie could address a critic: "*Monsieur et cher ami: Vous n'êtes qu'un cul, mais un cul sans musique.*" And Max Reger put it even more bluntly: "I am sitting in the smallest room of my house. I have your review before me. In a moment it will be behind me." Louis Armstrong, for whom musical expression was like breathing, was more tolerant. "There are only two ways to sum up music," he said. "Either it's good or it's bad. If it's good you don't mess around with it. You enjoy it."

You can sympathize with these three when critics hold forth on *Les Six*, as if Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, Georges Auric, and the others were all formed by the same cookie cutter. About all they had in common, other than a dislike of Wagnerian Teutonism and the Impressionism of Debussy, was geographic. (What link is there between the Swiss Protestant Honegger and the Provençal Jew Milhaud?) Honegger's roots were much like those of the middle and later Stravinsky, though his rhythms were stronger and more regular, his counterpoint richer. The work for which he is best known is *Le Roi David*, an oratorio for voices and orchestra, heavily reliant on brass and percussion.

The text and context are a series of psalms—though not like Stravinsky's symphony of same—powerful and rousing, and with a suggestion of a jazz beat that makes me wonder how it would sound if performed by a Gallic Hall Johnson choir. A beat, but not the modalities of jazz, and a controlled dissonance which is the more affecting because of its restraint. The recording at hand is particularly rewarding not only for the musicianship of Jean-Claude Casadesus and the Orchestre National de Lille, which is comfortable with the score, but for the clear enunciation of speakers and singers which makes any accompanying text unnecessary. [EMI Classics 7 54793 3.]



The post-Romanticism of Claude Debussy, if such it may be called, and his efforts to translate into sound what the Impressionists did on canvas—and the *grisaille* of their French sky—have little to do with sixes, sevens, or tens. Nor, to my limited ear, should we dive like loons for consanguinity with the Germanic as we listen to Debussy's *Le Martyre de Saint Sebastien*. His Sebastian, I would say, has more in common with the young saint caught in pigment by Velázquez. The first form of this work was as incidental music for a play by Gabriele d'Annunzio, the bravura figure who confused womanizing with revolution and Mussolini with Caesar. As an oratorio of sorts it is something of a patchwork of orchestral statements, unaccompanied choruses, solos, and narrations—deriving with Oriental overtones from medieval folk balladry and Renaissance polyphonics. Oddly enough, the disjointedness of the work adds to its strength, as if it were a brilliant improvisation. In the discerning hands of Michael Tilson Thomas and the London Symphony Orchestra, with narration by Leslie Caron, *Le Martyre* achieves a curious cohesiveness and a spiritual profundity. [Sony Classical SK 48240.]

Gabriel Fauré, among the finest of the composers whose work made the turn of the century and beyond an epoch, was downplayed by his generation for being at once too "smooth" and "popular" yet lacking in ambition and *arrivisme*. His gently consoling *Requiem* was deplored, perhaps because unlike Berlioz's it does not attempt to storm the gates of Heaven. I suspect that his contemporaries focused on the subtleties and ignored the musical assertiveness of works like his *Piano Quartets*, of which No. 1 in C Minor and No. 2 in G Minor have been recorded by Emanuel Ax (piano), Isaac Stern (violin), Jaime Laredo (viola), and Yo-Yo Ma (cello) in a beautifully articulated performance of what some have considered the acme in its genre. [Sony Classical SK 48066.] The four who make up the quartet, it is worth noting, are famous soloists, yet they merge their personalities to the greater glory of the score.

That merging and blending is, of

Mr. Toledano is an NR *contributing editor and the author of 19 books.*

course, what makes the artistry of the Juilliard String Quartet so great, like the Budapest before it. More than the digital skills and interpretive abilities of the individual musicians in a chamber group is required to make what they play an integrated whole. The Juilliard, in traversing Verdi's *String Quartet in A Minor,* nevers forgets that it is not a vehicle for taking bows, and remembers as well that Verdi was not writing grand opera when, during enforced idleness, he committed to paper this quiet, sometimes moody, but always interesting work. The *Quartet* reminds us too—though Verdi would write five years after it was composed that he "never attached any importance to the piece"—that Verdi wrote opera because he chose to, not because he could do little else. [Sony SK 48193.]

And so to *autres temps, autres moeurs.* For those who knew and loved jazz before it was corrupted by its "modern" and "bop" translations, I recommend a rousing CD by the legendary Kansas City pianist Jay McShann, known to his friends as Hootie. Kansas City developed a tightly wound and tautly expressed jazz, going its own way, and eventually gave the country the powerful Count Basie band—and McShann was one of the begetters. On *Some Blues,* recorded here and there, with various personnel including Clark Terry on trumpet (and fluegelhorn, an instrument that will have to change its name to Joe to get anywhere) and bassist Milt Hinton. All hands attack such standards as "Sweet Lorraine" and "Gee, Baby, Ain't I Good to You," and iterate some traditional blues, playing the kind of jazz we used to hear in cellar joints back in the Thirties and Forties when they were jumping. It is sometimes raucous but always, as they used to say at the dawn of the Swing era, beat to the socks. I loved it then and love it now, and so will you. [Chiaroscuro Records, CR(D) 320—830 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10002.]

Of later and more sophisticated vintage is *Flip Phillips with Strings—Try a Little Tenderness.* If I am right, it was Artie Shaw who tried first to popularize a combination of swing band and string section, though it had some play in the "symphonic jazz" of Paul Whiteman back in the 1920s. Here Flip Phillips, whose full-toned and breathy tenor sax enriched the old Woody Herman herd, brings warmth and unction to over a dozen oldies—the kind of songs Tony Bennett used to sing. Backed by strings, brass, and woodwinds, in tasteful arrangements by Dick Hyman, who sat in on piano, Phillips's playing is all honest sentiment and nostalgia—though never up to the Coleman Hawkins "Talk of the Town," if you remember it. [Chiaroscuro CR(D) 321.]

I commend, too, Roy Hargrove's *Of Kindred Souls*—today's minting of what we called mainstream jazz, in a recording dedicated to John "Dizzy" Gillespie, who imbibed Stravinsky and gave us bop. Hargrove plays a solid and distinguished trumpet, and it would be nice to hear him with other solid jazz instrumentalists, and not tied to the formality of his arrangements. [BMG Novus 63154-2.] Perhaps before then, BMG will dig into its old Bluebird masters and reissue those fine Boots & His Buddies records, cut in the 1930s on portable equipment in the Texas countryside by unknown musicians who could have done Harlem or Chicago proud. □

BOOKS IN BRIEF

The Hidden Life of Dogs, by Elizabeth Marshall Thomas (Houghton Mifflin, 148 pp., $18.95)

THIS short book has been receiving reviews couched in superlatives, and it is a pleasure to report that they are fully deserved. The book is moving, beautifully written, and finely observed. Mrs. Thomas, an anthropologist and novelist, wondered about the thought processes and emotions of animals, and so she did something brilliantly sensible: she spent a great deal of time observing dogs. She found that though one cannot intuit the full consciousness of an animal, nevertheless its behavior frequently indicates what it is thinking. Her writing is so good not only because of her sense of language but also because of the quality of her observations. Over the centuries some of the best science has come from simply looking at things. Mrs. Thomas found that dogs and cats have characteristic social arrangements and behave accordingly. Dogs establish a hierarchy. Cats arrange themselves around the top cat as if in a wheel pattern, but are otherwise not hierarchical. Cats and dogs have emotions. They experience both sexual feeling and love. Their primary field of reference is other dogs and cats, and their most powerful desire is for animal companionship. They are aware of their dependence upon humans, and have rituals of submission. When you approach a dog and his bone, he growls. He thinks that, like another dog, you want his slimy bone. The author followed a husky named Misha around Cambridge, Massachusetts, while he roamed. Was he in pursuit of sex or food? No. He was interested in his territory as it fitted into the local dog hierarchy. He went to great efforts to urinate high on hydrants and poles. Why? Mrs. Thomas infers that he wanted the other dogs to know that there was a big guy around. Humans often have their own ways of doing that. A splendid book.

—JEFFREY HART

Madness, Heresy, and the Rumor of Angels: The Revolt against the Mental Health System, by Seth Farber (Open Court Publishing Company, Peru, Illinois, 266 pp., $17.95)

IN THIS relentless book, Seth Farber argues that psychiatrists are no less than totalitarian jailers, social enforcers charged with the duty of incarcerating nonconformists. Simultaneously shocked and unsurprised, he presents the accounts of seven former psychiatric patients who tell of horrors performed in the name of medical science: "imprisonment" (hospitalization), "poisoning" (medication), etc. With his critique of the mental-health system, he might have served as a gadfly, defending individual liberty and questioning society's unswerving faith in "science." He does this, but can't stop himself from going too far. Farber is a revolutionary, it turns out, and rejects a more balanced, comprehensive assessment. In the foreword, Thomas Szasz notes that for every success story of modern psychiatry, there is a patient who has been harmed. If Farber believes this statement, then he must also accept its converse. In his eagerness to condemn, he misses the opportunity to engage in a more rigorous debate, for example on the failure of deinstitutionalization.

—TODD LENCZ

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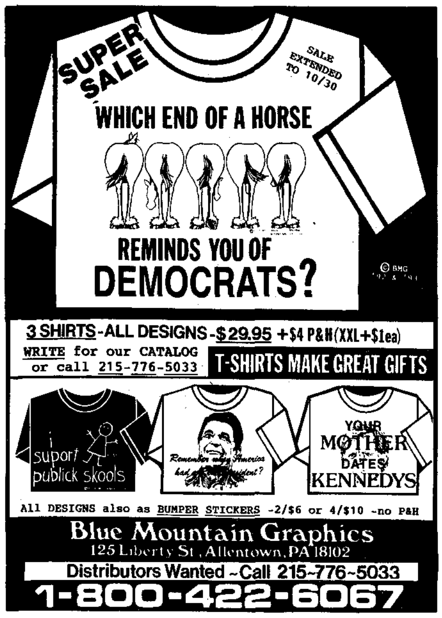

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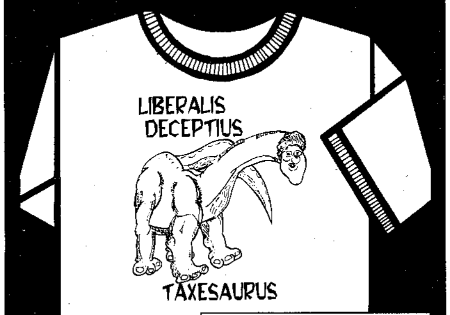
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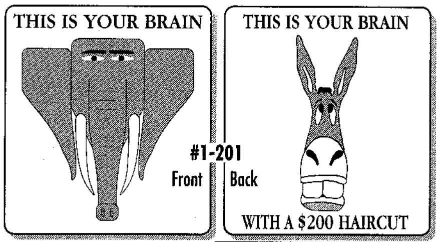
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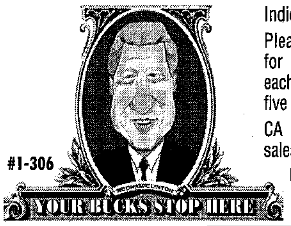
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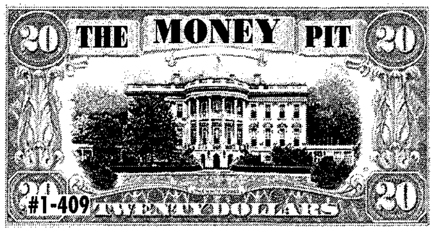
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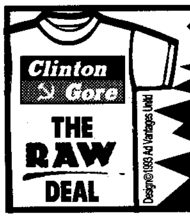
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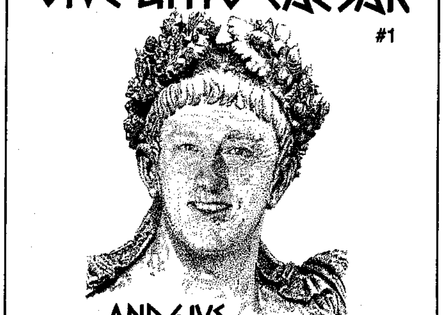

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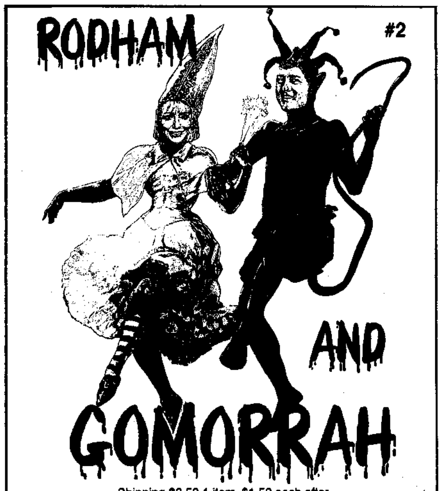
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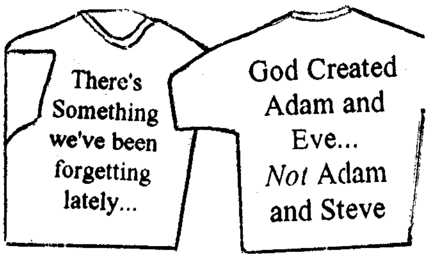
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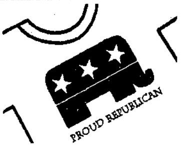
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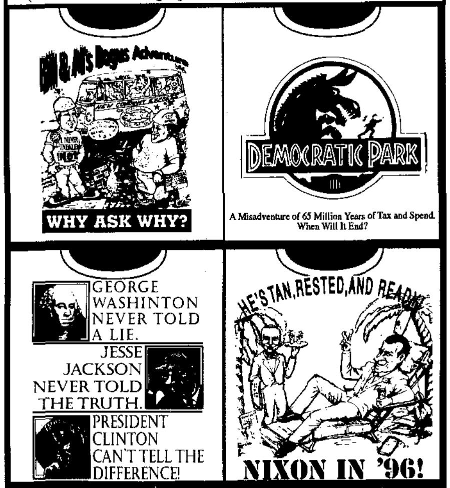
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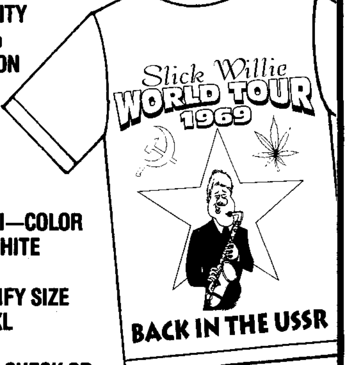

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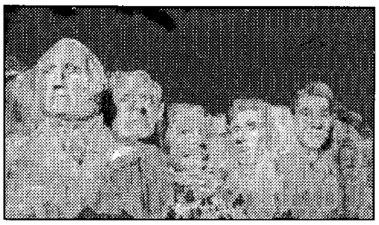

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WEBER

(Continued from page 33)

this regard the jury is still very much out on the Clinton Presidency. The budget battle did little to establish his image as a strong leader: the razor-thin victory merely averted the disastrous image of weakness which a defeat certainly would have created. The conventional wisdom on the budget fight is that Congress led the President, not the other way round. Now, with NAFTA, Mr. Clinton seems again to be allowing Congress and the Democrats' special interests to take the lead. Presidents are elected to do very few things; but giving leadership on such vital national issues is one of them. If he cannot lead Congress on this issue, if he cannot get NAFTA passed, then he will be pegged for the remainder of his term as a weak President.

3. *What will happen to the rest of the Clinton agenda?* The President seems to share Mrs. Clinton's view that NAFTA is in competition with health care for political capital. The truth is exactly the opposite: President Clinton probably cannot pass his health-care legislation without first winning passage of NAFTA.

Mr. Clinton lost the battle for his stimulus package earlier this year because he failed to reach out to moderate Senate Republicans, thus enabling Minority Leader Bob Dole to organize a solid filibuster against it. The President was able to get his budget passed in both the House and the Senate without a single GOP vote, but only because Senate rules do not allow a filibuster on budget votes. Without some measure of Republican support, Mr. Clinton cannot win passage of his health-care proposals, and he cannot gain that support unless his Administration pursues some confidence-building measures with congressional Republicans. NAFTA gives him a unique opportunity to rebuild bridges with the GOP by working with Republicans toward a common goal.

Mr. Clinton should not fool himself into believing he can recover politically if he allows NAFTA to go down to defeat. If the foreign-policy and economic implications of losing NAFTA are not daunting enough, the President should recognize that, like it or not, his political future is on the line. He had better fight to win. ☐

TRANS-O-GRAM / Kem Putney

1 F	2 D	3 H	■	4 P	5 J	6 B	7 C	8 N	9 U	■	10 T	11 A	12 F	13 K	14 L	15 S	16 I	■	17 M	18 H	19 P
■	20 K	21 T	22 R	23 U	24 X	■	25 Q	26 G	27 C	28 A	■	29 F	30 I	31 R	■	32 N	33 D	34 H	35 K	36 U	37 S
38 J	39 X	■	40 L	41 P	■	42 T	43 C	44 B	45 I	46 N	47 F	48 A	49 Q	■	50 G	51 V	52 P	53 H	54 N	55 X	56 E
57 J	58 W	■	59 R	60 K	61 T	62 F	■	63 M	64 I	65 A	66 S	■	67 K	68 G	69 L	70 F	71 C	72 D	■	73 P	74 M
75 O	76 G	■	77 R	78 T	79 Q	80 C	■	81 I	82 N	83 D	■	84 M	85 B	86 S	87 N	88 B	■	89 H	90 C	91 F	92 Q
93 V	94 R	95 P	■	96 X	97 K	■	98 D	99 F	100 O	101 S	■	102 J	103 G	■	104 T	105 C	■	106 L	107 I	108 K	■
109 Q	110 A	111 N	112 J	113 D	■	114 F	115 B	116 L	117 R	118 W	119 A	120 E	121 G	122 I	■	123 U	124 M	125 Q	■	126 D	127 F
128 T	■	129 B	130 X	■	131 I	132 Q	133 J	■	134 F	135 O	136 D	137 T	138 H	■	139 B	140 P	141 L	142 W	143 J	■	144 F
145 N	146 V	■	147 P	■	148 A	149 U	150 H	151 E	152 S	153 D	154 M	155 C	■	156 X	157 K	158 R	■	159 S	160 R	161 E	162 K
163 G	164 D	■	165 L	166 H	167 V	168 C	■	169 F	170 G	171 I	172 M	173 E	174 J	175 H	176 C	177 S	178 N	179 B	■	180 A	181 N
182 L	■	183 Q	184 U	185 O	186 T	■	187 I	188 K	189 P	190 R	191 X	192 Q	193 M	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

DEFINITIONS

A.	Loony bin	65 110 148 180 28 119 48 11
B.	At all locations	129 179 88 6 139 115 44 85
C.	Eatery	155 90 105 176 43 71 80 7 168 27
D.	Like some highways	136 113 164 2 126 72 98 33 153 83
E.	Orbit point	151 161 173 56 120
F.	Sydney is its capital (3 words)	12 62 144 114 70 127 29 99 134 91 169 47 1
G.	Choker, at times	26 170 50 76 121 68 163 103
H.	Zamenhof's folly	138 150 166 53 89 175 3 34 18
I.	The Romans and Greeks each had one	45 122 131 30 107 187 64 171 16
J.	Eleventh-century English king	143 57 102 112 174 38 133 5
K.	Likings	162 67 20 60 13 188 108 157 35 97
L.	Many	106 165 69 14 116 40 141 182
M.	Incitement to rebel	63 154 193 124 84 172 74 17
N.	Teacher's aid	32 82 145 46 111 54 178 181 8 87
O.	Pain	100 75 135 185
P.	Pilgrim vessel	189 147 95 41 52 140 19 4 73
Q.	"do ordain and ______"	192 125 109 79 183 92 25 49 132
R.	Without end	22 190 160 117 94 59 31 158 77
S.	Strange happenings	37 86 15 159 101 177 66 152
T.	Heritage Foundation, e.g. (2 words)	137 42 104 186 61 78 21 128 10
U.	Illuminated	23 149 36 123 81 184 9
V.	Seine tributary	167 93 146 51
W.	Miracle bean	142 118 58
X.	Needing slaking	130 156 96 55 24 191 39

DIRECTIONS

The object of TRANS-O-GRAM is to fill in the puzzle diagram by guessing the words from their definitions, and transferring each letter of the guessed word to the correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. When the diagram is filled in it will spell out a quotation from some published work (reading normally from left to right, black boxes indicating the ends of words); also, when the words have all been filled in above, their initial letters will spell out the author and title of the quoted work. The acrostic feature, and the relative word-lengths in the diagram, will assist in the solution. Spelling and definitions on the authority of *Webster's Deluxe Unabridged Dictionary*, Second Edition.

Solution to Last Issue's Trans-O-Gram. DICK WILLIAMS: *On "Entitlements"*: "Dr. Joycelyn Elders should be confirmed as U.S. Surgeon General. But the fiery Arkansan doesn't deserve the job on merit or belief. She is entitled to confirmation because President Clinton picked her . . . With her nomination, condom roulette becomes a sanctioned sport."

For Vol. II of the puzzle collection, send $5.95 (plus $1 S&H) to: T-Gram Plus, 309 S. Boundary St., Williamsburg, Virginia 23185.

ON THE RIGHT / Wm. F. Buckley Jr.

The Health Paradigm

NEW YORK, AUGUST 20

The emanations from President Clinton about the new health program baffle many who try to materialize from what he said the exact shape of the program he will endorse. We know about it only that the idea is to universalize health care, and to make employers responsible for paying the cost of it, and to impose some kind of managed system on suppliers, in order to keep costs down; and yes, there will be a role there for the individual states to play; and no, the burden on business will not be overwhelming or instantaneous inasmuch as the costs will phase in during a period of five to seven years from now, and we mustn't make this a partisan struggle, and so's your old man.

It's understandable, in the circumstances, that early commentary on the Clinton Prolegomena wanders hither and thither. What follows is one man's version of the basic principles that govern the problem we confront:

1. The American people have decided that they will not tolerate a society in which individuals who run into costly medical problems will find themselves either incapable of paying for their treatment, or destitute afterward.

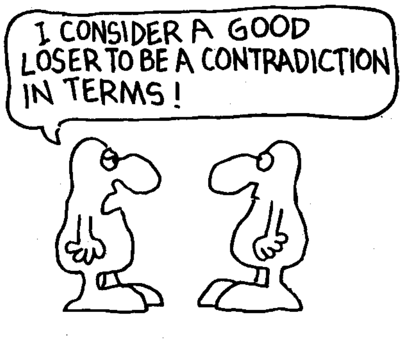
2. That is where insurance comes in. It is no different, really, from what you do to protect yourself in case your house burns down. Instead of facing, suddenly, a $150,000 loss, you go to a company that is taking in money from one thousand other homeowners, and they tell you that if you pay $525 every year, they will insure your house against fire loss. You run your eyes down the Yellow Pages and find another insurance broker who tells you that his company will write an identical policy for $500, and so you give your business to him. The broker who lost out alerts his company to the loss of the policy and efforts are made to tighten up so that the following year, the company can be competitive against the lower bidder.

3. Now the company that contracted to insure you for $500 lays out options. If you will agree to a $5,000 deductible—only your garage burned down, maybe, not the house—the company will agree to reduce your premium from $500 per year to $425 per year. You sit down and do some calculations. What is decided depends on a million variables, and no one can satisfactorily anticipate what will be the decision of Mr. and Mrs. Jones applying their own variables to the question. They decide to take the risk; to save the extra premium. Their neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, decide, No way! They want the full insurance, and so they pay the extra premium.

4. The insurance company then says, Look, some fires do more damage than other fires, depending on precautions that are taken. If your electrical wiring is out of date, if you live more than five miles from the nearest fire station, if you don't have enough fire extinguishers in your house, then the risks mount. If you will agree to an annual examination of your house by our expert, we'll reduce your premium by another $25. The expert will then make recommendations. If you act on those recommendations, then, depending on the gravity of the exposure, we'll reduce your premium by anywhere from another $25, to $75.

This idea appeals a lot to the Smiths, whose house is pretty new, but not much to the Joneses, whose house is quite old and might require a fair amount of electrical rewiring. One couple says yes, the other couple says no.

5. A third couple resists the entire plan. The hell with it, Mr. Lucky says, I am a gambling man. Ah, but Mr. and Mrs. Lucky run into The Law. The Law in their state says: Everybody has to take out insurance against a fire that totally ravages his home. Unless you can show an insurance policy that protects you, the state will take out a policy for you and send the bill to your town clerk who will add the premium to your property tax.


I CONSIDER A GOOD LOSER TO BE A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS!

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6. Meanwhile, no company has stepped forward to offer a fire policy for $50—which is all that 10 per cent of the homeowners can afford. So those who are paying for fire insurance agree to share the cost of those who simply can't afford it. That means a ten per cent surcharge, so that now the basic policy is going to cost $550, with $50 going toward coverage for the poor.

This is the schemata against which Mr. Clinton's plan should be judged. ☐

The Nuclear Quandary

NEW YORK, AUGUST 18

The looming question of North Korea and The Bomb leaves many speechless. And the reason for this is plain to those who have looked carefully into the factors that cause a fearful equilibrium.

—North Korea is headed toward the acquisition of the bomb. We cannot let her have it without coming face to face with a nuclear nightmare. Japan has already said, in almost as many words, that she would pull out of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1995, when it comes up for renewal, if North Korea has the bomb or is well on the way to having it. China and conceivably Taiwan would in the one case beef up nuclear reserves, in the other, develop them.

—To "take out" North Korea's nuclear capability is something that our Air Force could do, but only superficially. We could take out that much of it as is above ground, with one of those smashing attacks General Schwarzkopf taught us about in Desert Storm. But we have been reminded (e.g., by Russell Seitz in an important essay in the Winter 1991–92 issue of *The National Interest*) that existing nuclear facilities in North Korea are not to be thought of as similar to those in Iraq that were disposed of by the Israeli air force in 1981. The North Korean nuclear development capability is exactly described as an iceberg. General Schwarzkopf could knock off the tip on Monday, which does not give us security on the following Monday.

—Meanwhile the retaliatory powers of

North Korea are formidable. It has, per capita, the largest army in the world (1.2 million). A reliable estimate of the immediate casualties that would result from a North Korean offensive is 180,000 South Koreans killed, and 36,000 U.S. soldiers. Seoul would probably collapse within two days.

—Which means that the only way we could settle the North Korean threat is by nuclear devastation.

When at the DMZ recently, President Clinton uttered the following words: "We would quickly and overwhelmingly retaliate if they [North Korea] were ever to develop and use nuclear weapons. It would mean the end of their country as they know it." Now, textual analysts can go to work on those two sentences and easily finger the operative qualification. On the other hand, the sentences do give off an apocalyptic air.

If the sentence is to be taken literally, we will do nothing if the North Koreans merely acquire the weapon. If they should proceed to use it, then this would mean "the end of their country." We dropped more bombs on Iraq than we did on Nazi Germany, and we hardly accomplished the "end" of that country. To do any such thing has got to mean going nuclear. And, come to think of it, how else would we go, if North Korea were actually to "use" nuclear bombs?

Mr. Seitz, who is with Harvard University's John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, reminds us of the grim scientific realities. We are informed of several things, among them:

—What took the Allies 40,000 man-years to do in the 1940s when we made the Hiroshima bomb took India only 2,500 man-years in the 1970s.

—Both India and Taiwan now have more than 2,500 American-educated PhDs. South Koreans are now acquiring more than 1,000 American doctorates annually.

—Static pressures in excess of three million atmospheres, a fantasy in 1945, are now reached in diamond anvil cells that fit in a thimble.

—In the near future it will be possible "to duplicate almost all past technology in all but the most forlorn of Third World backwaters . . . Any effort to keep the microchips vital to our technology out of the hands of Iraq and Libya lacks relevance to the question of the evolution of a Third World bomb."

The dilemma shakes its finger at us darkly. On the one hand the ultimate deterrent is the use of the bomb against any countries so reckless as themselves to threaten its use. On the other hand, the psychological sequestration of the nuclear weapon, like that of poison gas after World War I, is the hardiest anti-proliferation weapon in our arsenal. We need to be prepared on the one hand to harden the ethos against the bomb, while calmly explaining to the world under what circumstances we have no alternative but to use it. □

Everybody Sell?

NEW YORK, AUGUST 2

Many years ago I was a guest at a very fancy lunch presided over by the editor-publisher of *This Week*, at the time the widest-circulation publication in the English language, a Sunday supplement of the largest city newspapers. The theme of the event was, "Everybody Sell!" I remember thinking the enterprise faintly vulgar. There was the head of Tiffany's over there, the heads of Lord & Taylor, Bloomingdale's, Hallmark Cards; and over there, the head of Barnes & Noble. I had to come to terms with my prejudice in favor of everybody selling books; but for the rest of it, I let my mind slip into the easy fatuity that ours is a society that over-consumes and under-saves. The nexus hadn't firmed itself up in my mind. But after a protracted recession one begins to understand that merchandising is an essential aspect of the whole capitalist idea. And one with roots deep in our culture. Connecticut is called the Nutmeg State because our great-great-great-grandparents went around the colonies selling sawdust, and passing it off as nutmeg.

Curiosity then turns to the question: When selling is especially sluggish, is this the result of a genuine fear by many families that rainy-day time may be just ahead and they had better postpone the purchase of a new automobile because they may need that money to pay the mortgage? Not-to-buy for such reasons makes complete sense. But a recent experience reinforces the conclusion that there has been a dissipation of that ethos that made it possible to sell a refrigerator to an Eskimo. I cite the following experience:

Spending approximately 100 days on the road every year I was much attracted to the innovation I read about, a computer with an in-built printer. Granted, much of what you write on the road you can sleepily store until you return to your mother computer. Or if it is a journalistic chore, you can E-mail the copy via a telephone modem. Or if you get really stuck, from your hotel room you can E-mail a fax to the front desk, and have them send up the two or three pages you need as a fresh coda to the speech you have to give that night.

But there is no substitute for the printer at hand. Spurred by the thought, I visited the local computer arcade. I asked a wandering salesman if he had available for inspection the new Canon. The answer was yes, and I was led to it, one of two dozen laptops on display. I asked him kindly to show me how it printed. He ran one, then a second, then a third piece of paper through it, and they emerged absolutely pristine, not the idea at all. He then disappeared, returned, and said that evidently the ink cartridge was dry, and he did not have a second ink cartridge.

So, I said, what shall we do?

Well, he said, he didn't quite know.

When would ink cartridges turn up?

He didn't know. "They just send them along sort of every now and then."

Would he take my name and phone number and call me when he could demonstrate the computer?

Better I should call in, and just ask if they were ready to demonstrate.

Memories flooded in of all those times in Soviet stores where there was never any interest whatever in executing a sale. Why should there be? The salesforce salaries were static, the producers were told by some state bureau what to manufacture. It is of course different in America, but the economic law that the appetite of the individual is infinite, the resources of the planet are finite, and therefore that tension builds which is necessary to generate the demand for total production (Say's Law), suffers if there aren't pulsations of energy that stir the acquisitive instinct. If nobody was disposed to sell any breakfast food other than corn flakes, we would never have found Post Toasties, or English muffins with peanut butter on them.

In search for a metaphor for skepticism about buying, one is mostly tempted by fact of the contamination of government. So many people have discovered that most government is a idiot, a ass, that skepticism about fresh products creeps in, of the kind that Andy Rooney so nicely capitalizes on once a week on *60 Minutes*. It is understandable, as often as not—this defensive mechanism against snake oil. But you have to be blind not to notice improvements—e.g., in the world of computers—so somebody should locate those sleepy people and inject them with a little enthusiasm for what there is to defend in the proposition that everybody should sell. □

(Universal Press Syndicate)

THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER

Matchbook Man

TO LIBERALS he's the "blue-collar, white-male, racist, sexist homophobe." To feminists he's the "unsocialized" male because he continues to elude their gelding shears. I call him the Matchbook Man because he was the target of self-improvement ads in the matchbooks of my childhood.

Having had a mother who smoked four packs a day, I saw a lot of matchbooks and practiced my reading with them. On the inside of the cover were tiny grey coupons and ads that said: "Finish High School at Home in Your Spare Time!" or "Learn Locksmithing" or "Study Radio Repair" or "Be a Private Detective"—always at home in your spare time.

Some of the same ads can still be found in gun magazines or on late-night TV, but today's dwindling supply of matchbooks has been classed up. Now the inside is blank, while the cover contains embossed pictures of exclusive hotels and restaurants that the Matchbook Man never enters.

He frequents places like the pool hall where I have my midday beer after I finish my errands. I like it because there are no talkative waiters named Bruce, just chain-smoking waitresses. The clientele neither know nor care who I am, so no one says to me, "I've always wanted to write."

It was the day of the House budget vote and several young workingmen were watching the news. When the announcer said, "Congressman Timothy Penny has resigned," the T-shirted, tattooed viewers exchanged eager glances, their eyes lighting up with an energizing spark that seemed to bounce from face to face, linking them all in a circuitry of joy. There was something profoundly touching about it, and also something familiar. I had seen this raw masculine pride before.

It was during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, when Adlai Stevenson cornered the Soviet representative at the UN and demanded the truth, vowing, "I'll stand here till hell freezes over!"

The next day, some tree pruners were working outside my apartment building and I heard one of them say, "Boy, old Stevenson really told 'em, dint he?" His face was lit with the same glow that I saw on the faces of the boys in the pool hall. It's a look that never comes over a woman even though she may share the opinion that brings it on. Epiphanies composed of bellicose swagger and a purity that has nothing to do with sexuality are the exclusive property of the Matchbook Man.

It's just about all he has left. He used to be "the man who found a home in the Army," but now he must look hard to find the Army amid the welter of homemaking missions on which it has embarked. Craving an aura of Spartan hardness in which to prove himself, he gets instead Operation Restore Hope, made glorious by "the interaction we're accustomed to seeing between American troops and people we help," said Dick Cheney; or Operation Provide Comfort on the Iraqi border—where, wrote Mary McGrory, "Americans thrilled to the sight of U.S. soldiers changing babies."

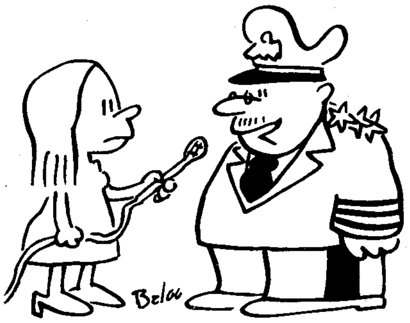
While liberals form task force after task force to cure alienation in their beloved urban underclass, the Matchbook Man is being driven crazy by the growing primacy of warm feeling over cold justice in American life. His own moral center has the bleak, unequivocal beauty of a January dawn, but let him display it and it will be dismissed as an "inappropriate response."

When he watches news reports about "Iron John" manhood-weekend outings, he sees the same whey-faced academics who condemn him during the week, who know nothing about a carburetor except how to spell it. When he changes channels he will very likely find Weekend Man's feminist wife holding forth in a panel discussion about "the myth of masculinity." And should he leaf through a magazine he will find one of those nasty little editorial asides that politically correct journalists take pains to insert in their copy—e.g., *Time*'s Richard Corliss's gratuitous description of Mike Tyson as "an exemplar of all those sad studs who are prisoners of manhood."

When he objects to Betty Boop congresspersons like Pat Schroeder and an attorney general with the mean mouth of a social worker on the rampage, it merely proves that "he just doesn't get it." What he does get all too well are our new definitions: an honorable man is one who doesn't cave until the last minute, and a maverick is one who teases like a belle to get prime-time coverage. Every time it happens the Matchbook Man dies a little, but no, he's not alienated.

TO HIM, every week is the Week That Was. He recoiled when California Highway patrolperson Melanie Singer burst into tears on the witness stand and wrecked the defense in the second LAPD trial. Now he has a brand-new crazymaker: the majestically ditzy Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky, a dead ringer for Zasu Pitts, who changed her mind at the last minute and put the Clinton budget over the top, then spent the following day on the tube wondering whether she had "fallen on her sword." Another noble Roman concept bites the dust.

Feminists will find my response to the Matchbook Man inappropriate, but I'm sure Mae West would back me up: I like a man who just doesn't get it. —FLORENCE KING



"Well, of course, young lady—you need *a $400 hammer in order to drive a $30 nail!"*

Miss King's latest book is With Charity Toward None.

Visa® Signature

Our new Lifetime Soil-Release Guarantee lets you clean up on table linens without lifting a finger.

Milliken & Company now offers your customers this exclusive soil-release guarantee, good for the life of our VISA® Signature table linens:

Normal food soils and stains will wash out of table linens and napkins made of VISA for as long as you own them. If they don't, send us the stained item with a written explanation and we'll replace it with an identical or comparable product. Naturally, you must follow instructions for care and home laundering.

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The best part is, you don't have to do a thing after you make the sale. How can we offer this guarantee? Because VISA soil-release performance won't wash out, unlike topical treatments. And don't forget, these table linens let you sell more than easy care. Colors stay bright. Whites stay white. They feel great to the touch and require little or no ironing.

You want to clean up without lifting a finger. So make sure you carry VISA Signature table linens. Contact your VISA table linen manufacturer for more information.

Soil-release for the life of the fabric.

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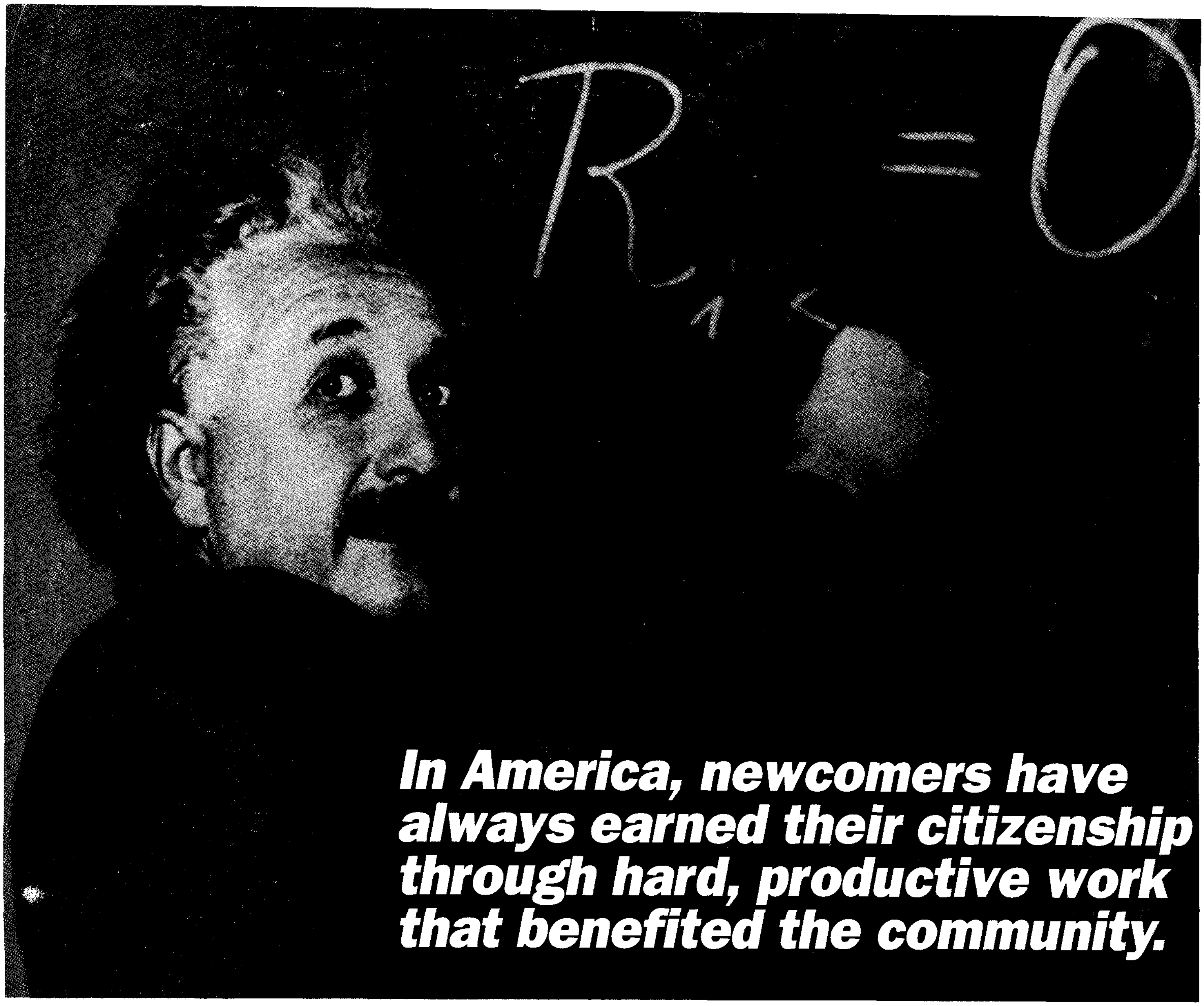
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That's a tradition we respect.

Companies must earn their citizenship, too.

For Mitsubishi Motors Corporation, the path has been one of mutual effort, mutual trust and extensive long-term investment.

It began in 1981 with Mitsubishi Motor Sales of America. Then came Diamond-Star Motors. Mitsubishi Motors Credit America. The Mitsubishi Motors America Design Studio. Value Rent-A-Car.

All of which brought over 5,400 new jobs and millions of dollars in investments to America. In return, American worke have given us the Eclipse an the new Galant, both built at Diamond-Star Motors.

We thank America for being a land of opportunity. And a place where mutual effort can be mutually rewarded.

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